PERSONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY

Table of Contents
Revised 05-30-02

The PAR'A
Center

Academy Introduction

This academy helps paraeducators to carry out self-appraisals, participate in the evaluation process, and plan for continued professional growth and development. The course covers stress-management strategies and using creativity and flexibility in dealing with problematic situations.

The role of the instructor in this academy is to facilitate reflection and discussion. A list of resources has been provided as supplemental material for the course. It is recommended that the instructor bring several of the resources to the class and make them available to the participants throughout. Because of the nature of this academy, it is strongly recommended that the instructor read through the entire academy, as it will help in knowing how to lead the participants through each of the activities.

This academy includes the **Personal Growth Through Emotion, Reflection, and Connection Journal**. This journal provides an opportunity for the participants to spend time reflecting on the topics covered in the academy and how the various topics impact their lives. The journal contains the essence of this academy and should be distributed at the beginning of the first class meeting. The journal will be referred to throughout the academy when the participants need it as **"(R#)."** This journal does not need to be turned in or looked at by the instructor; it is for the participants to keep.

Using the **Personal Growth and Development Academy** transparency **(T1)**, review the modules with the paraeducators before beginning the academy.

Personal Growth and Development

The PAR²A
Center

Module A: Reflection and Personal History

- *Create your personal history.*

- *Reflect on the personal history and how it affects relationships with students.*

- *Reflect on the personal history and how it affects relationships with professionals.*

Module B: Monitoring and Managing Stress

- *Identify sources of stress in the workplace.*

- *Identify personal reactions to job-related stress.*

- *Describe various ways to manage stress.*

- *Make a personal plan for managing stress.*

Personal Growth and Development
(continued)

Module C: Creativity and Flexibility

- *Recognize the mental blocks that inhibit creativity in the workplace.*

- *Apply creative methods to manage problematic situations while expanding flexibility and fluency in thinking.*

- *Make a personal plan for enhancing creativity and flexibility in the workplace.*

Module D: Planning for Continued Growth and Development

- *Conduct a self-analysis of job-related skills.*

- *Identify areas in which development of skills or additional knowledge is desired.*

- *Identify specific supervision needs in light of personal skills and needs.*

- *Identify choices for training opportunities and recognize the advantages and limitations of each.*

- *Create an action plan for personal growth and development.*

x

Module E: Participating in the Evaluation Process

- *Describe the need for systematic, planned, purposeful feedback regarding job performance.*

- *Identify the relationship between duties listed on job descriptions and types of feedback needed.*

- *Demonstrate use of self-evaluation methods.*

- *Demonstrate effective ways of accepting and using constructive feedback from supervisors.*

- *Design a personal plan for self-improvement based on job evaluations.*

Module A: Reflection and Personal History

Personal Growth and Development Academy
Module A: Reflection and Personal History

A. Energizer: Your Tree

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to get to know the other participants and to begin to reflect on themselves.

A.1.1 Steps
- Have the participants take a few minutes to reflect on their lives.
- Ask them to think about what kind of tree they would be, if they were a tree, and why.
- When finished, introduce yourself and share with the group the tree you picked for yourself and why.
- When finished, have each participant introduce themselves and share what kind of tree they chose to represent them and why.

B. Module Goals

Using the **Module A: Reflection and Personal History** handout and transparency **(H1/T1)**, review the goals of the module.
1. Create your personal history.
2. Reflect on the personal history and how it affects relationships with students.
3. Reflect on the personal history and how it affects relationships with school professionals.

Goal 1: Create your personal history.

1.1 Lecture: Creating a Reflection Journal

Distribute the **Personal Growth Through Emotion, Reflection, and Connection** reflection journals.

Creating a personal history requires us to look at our past in order to uncover preconceived ideas about how we teach and how we learn. Our personal history is based on our beliefs, intentions, and interpretations of our lives. It can help us to make sense of our current experiences and why we respond the way we do to those experiences. Developing a personal history may heighten your awareness of your own learning and will allow you to reflect on your changing ideas and attitudes throughout your career.

1.2 Activity: The Roots of Reflection

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to develop a better awareness of how one's personal history affects one's self and one's relationships with other people.

1.1.1 Steps

- Have the participants read **The Roots of Reflection: The Story of Jill (R1)** in their journals on their own.
- When finished, facilitate a class discuss about Jill's roots for personal growth.
- After the discussion, have the participants complete **Jill's Roots for Personal Growth (R2)** in their journals.

Goal 2: Reflect on the personal history and how it affects relationships with students

2.1 Activity: Your Roots for Personal Growth

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on how they perceive and relate to students.

2.1.1 Steps

- Using **What are Your Roots for Personal Growth? (R3)** in their journal, have the participants reflect on and write about a critical teaching incident that made them stop and question what they were thinking and doing.
- When finished, have the participants break into small groups and share their stories.
- After discussing their stories, have the participants complete **Your Roots for Personal Growth (R4)** in their journal.
- When finished, have the participants break into small groups and share their root systems.

2.2 Discussion: The Beginning of Growth

Have the participants read through **Beginning of Growth (R5)** on their own. When finished, using **The Trunk (R6)** in the reflection journal, facilitate a class discussion regarding the questions Jill asked herself about her critical teaching incident.

2.3 Activity: How are You Growing?

Paraeducators will participate in an activity the provides an opportunity to reflect on their own personal growth.

2.3.1 Steps

- Using **How are You Growing? (R7)** in their journal, have the participants write about a teaching incident when they had an unexpected student reaction.
- When finished, have the participants break into small groups and share their stories.

- After discussing their stories, have the participants complete **Your Trunk (R8)** in their journal.
- When finished, have the participants break into small groups and share their stories.

Goal 3: Reflect on the personal history and how it affects relationships with school professionals

3.1 Activity: Your Branches

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on the actions they take to understand their experiences.

3.1.1 Steps
- Have the participants read **A Branch: Jill's Continuing Story of Personal Growth (R9)** in their journals.
- When finished, discuss the story as a class or in small groups.
- After discussing the story, have the participants complete **Your Branch (R10)** in their journals.
- When finished, have the participants share and discuss their branches as a class or in small groups.

3.2 Activity: Your Leaves

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on the outcomes of their actions.

3.2.1 Steps
- Have the participants read **A Leaf: Jill's Continuing Story of Personal Growth (R11)**.
- When finished, discuss the story as a class or in small groups.
- After discussing the story, have the participants complete **Your Leaves (R12)** in their journals.
- When finished, have the participants share and discuss their leaves as a class or in small groups.

3.3 Activity: Branching Out

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on their personal history and how it affects their relationships with other school

professionals.

3.3.1 Steps

- Have the participants read **Branching Out: Intuition and Personal Experience (R13)** in their journal.
- When finished, have the participants complete **Are You Branching Out? (R14)** in their journal by reflecting on and writing about the ways they reflect and grow with their colleagues.

Module A Handouts

Module A: Reflection and Personal History

1.   Create your personal history.

2.   Reflect on the personal history and how it affects relationships with students.

3.   Reflect on the personal history and how it affects relationships with school professionals.

Module A Transparencies

Module A: Reflection and Personal History

The PARA Center

- *Create your personal history.*

- *Reflect on the personal history and how it affects relationships with students.*

- *Reflect on the personal history and how it affects relationships with school professionals.*

Module B: Monitoring and Managing Stress

Personal Growth and Development Academy
Module B: Monitoring and Managing Stress

A. Module Goals

Using the **Module B: Monitoring and Managing Stress** handout and transparency **(H1/T1)**, review the goals of the module.

1. Identify sources of stress in the workplace.
2. Identify personal reactions to job-related stress.
3. Describe various ways to manage stress.
4. Make a personal plan for managing stress.

Goal 1: Identify sources of stress in the workplace.

Note to Instructor: Review the elements covered in the reflection journals in the previous module, clarifying points where needed.

1.1 Activity: What Causes Stress?

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on and define trust and stress.

1.1.1 Steps
- Have the participants read **Trust: A Nutrient of Growth (R15)** in their journals.
- When finished, discuss the story as a class or in small groups.
- After discussing the story, have the participants complete **Is the Nutrient of Trust Present? (R16)** in their journal.
- Have the participants complete **Is Trust a Nutrient of Your Growth? (R17)** in their journals by writing or drawing about a stressful incident in their own life.
- Have the participants complete **Is the Nutrient of Trust Present? (R18)** by reflecting on strategies and environments that help them deal with stress.
- When finished, discuss the journal entries as a class or in small groups.

Goal 2: Identify personal reactions to job-related stress.

2.1 Activity: Personal Reactions to Stress

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on their relationships within the workplace and job-related stressors.

2.1.1 Steps

- Have the participants read **Community: A Nutrient for Growth (R19)** in their journals.
- When finished, discuss the story as a class or in small groups.
- After discussing the story, have the participants complete **What is the Moisture Level? (R20)** in their journal by reflecting on the level of support within their workplace community.
- When finished, discuss the journal entries as a class or in small groups.

Goal 3: Describe various ways to manage stress.

3.1 Activity: Managing Stress

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on their support structures and ways to manage stress.

3.1.1 Steps

- Have the participants read **Community Structure: A Nutrient of Growth (R21)** in their journal, reflecting on the ways Jill managed her stress.
- When finished, have the participants complete **What is the Community Forecast? (R22)** in their journal by writing or drawing their story of how their community helps them to manage stress.
- When finished, discuss the stories as a class or in small groups.

Goal 4: Make a personal plan for managing stress.

4.1 Activity: Developing a Plan for Managing Stress

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on their personal growth climates.

4.1.1 Steps

- Have the participants complete **Your Climate Control (R23)** in their journals.
- When finished, discuss the journal entries as a class or in small groups.
- After discussing the journal entries, have the participants read and reflect on **Growing (R24)** in their journal.

Module B Handouts

Module B: Monitoring and Managing Stress

1.   Identify sources of stress in the workplace.

2.   Identify personal reactions to job-related stress.

3.   Describe various ways to manage stress.

4.   Make a personal plan for managing stress.

Module B Transparencies

Module B: Monitoring and Managing Stress

The PARA Center

- *Identify sources of stress in the workplace.*

- *Identify personal reactions to job-related stress.*

- *Describe various ways to manage stress.*

- *Make a personal plan for managing stress.*

Module C: Creativity and Flexibility

Personal Growth and Development Academy
Module C: Creativity and Flexibility

A. Module Goals

Using the **Module C: Creativity and Flexibility** handout and transparency (**H1/T1**), review the goals of the module.

1. Recognize the mental blocks that inhibit creativity in the workplace.
2. Apply creative methods to manage problematic situations while expanding flexibility and fluency in thinking.
3. Make a personal plan for enhancing creativity and flexibility in the workplace.

Goal 1: Recognize the mental blocks that inhibit creativity in the workplace.

Note to Instructor: Review the elements covered in the reflection journals in the previous module, clarifying points where needed.

1.1 Discussion: Making Changes

Have the participants read **What I Need (R25)** in their journal. When finished, facilitate a discussion regarding Jill's story and her possibilities, incorporating **My Possibilities (R26)** into the discussion.

1.2 Activity: What Changes Would I Like To Make?

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on creativity and those things that block creativity.

1.2.1 Steps

- Have the participants complete **What Do I Need? (R27)** in their journal by reflecting and drawing or writing about blocks to their creative potential.
- When finished, have the participants complete **What Are My Possibilities? (R28)** in their journal by reflecting on and writing about possibilities to unblock creativity.

Goal 2: Apply creative methods to manage problematic situations while expanding flexibility and fluency in thinking.

2.1 Lecture: Why Self-Assessment?

Review **Why Self-Assessment? (R29)** in the journal. Self-Assessment helps you to begin your personal inquiry into yourself. The assessment explores four areas of personal growth:

- Conversations,
- Connections,
- Reflections, and
- Actions.

Your imagination and intuition will be a powerful tool for you as you think about how you feel, think, talk, and act in each of the areas. As you think about the different dimensions of yourself, reflect on the various aspects of your life, for example, family, personal, work, friends, spiritual, and creative. You may prefer working on your own or with a small group of people. Either way, keep track of your most honest and thoughtful responses by writing or drawing your experiences on the paper. The more clearly you define your experiences the easier you will be able to pull from them, and use them in your present situation. Don't agonize about your responses. The more you participate the more you will learn. Open yourself up to experience and enjoy yourself and others.

The self-assessment is composed of a *LIGHT* side and a *DARK* side. In the reflection journals, the sun is the metaphor for the light and the cloud is the metaphor for the dark. You are a multifaceted individual and you have your light side and your dark side. The light side represents your strengths and the dark side represents the areas you tend to ignore. When you shine a light on the dark side of your inner dimensions you expose yourself to learn more about why you feel and act the way you do. Once you understand your light and dark sides you will be more open to changing what you don't like and strengthening what you do. As you become more aware of your instinctual nature you will act with as much consciousness, integrity, and dignity as possible.

2.2 Activity: My Conversations

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on

areas of creativity and flexibility in their conversations.

2.2.1 Steps

- Have the participants complete **How Do I Have Conversations With People? (R30)** in their journals.
- When finished, have the participants discuss their entries in small groups.
- Have the participants complete **How Can I Be More Thoughtful in My Conversations? (R31)** in their journals.
- When finished, have the participants discuss their entries in small groups.

2.3 Activity: My Connections

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on areas of creativity and flexibility in their connections.

2.3.1 Steps

- Have the participants complete **How Do I Make Connections With People? (R32)** in their journals.
- When finished, have the participants discuss their entries in small groups.
- Have the participants complete **How Can I Be More Thoughtful in My Connections? (R33)** in their journals.
- When finished, have the participants discuss their entries in small groups.

2.4 Activity: My Reflections

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on areas of creativity and flexibility in their reflections.

2.4.1 Steps

- Have the participants complete **How Do I Reflect With People? (R34)** in their journals.
- When finished, have the participants discuss their entries in small groups.
- Have the participants complete **How Can I Be More Thoughtful in**

My Reflections? (R35) in their journals.
- When finished, have the participants discuss their entries in small groups.

2.5 Activity: My Actions

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on areas of creativity and flexibility in their actions.

2.5.1 Steps
- Have the participants complete **How Do I Create Actions Because of My Conversations, Connections, and Reflections? (R36)** in their journals.
- When finished, have the participants discuss their entries in small groups.
- Have the participants complete **How Can I Be More Thoughtful in My Actions? (R37)** in their journals.
- When finished, have the participants discuss their entries in small groups.

Goal 3: Make a personal plan for enhancing creativity and flexibility in the workplace.

3.1 Activity: Developing a Plan

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on ways to become more creative and flexible in the workplace.

3.1.1 Steps

- Working individually or in small groups, have the participants complete **Creating My Personal Plan (R38)**.
- When finished, ask the participants to share and discuss their personal plans with the class.

Module C Handouts

Module C: Creativity and Flexibility

1.   Recognize the mental blocks that inhibit creativity in the workplace.

2.   Apply creative methods to manage problematic situations while expanding flexibility and fluency in thinking.

3.   Make a personal plan for enhancing creativity and flexibility in the workplace.

Module C Transparencies

Module C: Creativity and Flexibility

The PARA Center

- *Recognize the mental blocks that inhibit creativity in the workplace.*

- *Apply creative methods to manage problematic situations while expanding flexibility and fluency in thinking.*

- *Make a personal plan for enhancing creativity and flexibility in the workplace.*

Module D: Planning for Continued Growth and Development

Personal Growth and Development Academy
Module D: Planning for Continued Growth and Development

A. Module Goals

Using the **Module D: Planning for Continued Growth and Development** handout and transparency **(H1/T1)**, review the goals of the module.

1. Conduct a self-analysis of job-related skills.
2. Identify areas in which development of skills or additional knowledge is desired.
3. Identify specific supervision needs in light of personal skills and needs.
4. Identify choices for training opportunities and recognize the advantages and limitations of each.
5. Create an action plan for personal growth and development.

Goal 1: Conduct a self-analysis of job-related skills.

1.1 Activity: What are Your Roots for Learning and Exploring?

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on how they learn and explore.

1.1.1 Steps

- Have the participants complete **How Do You Learn and Explore? (R39)** in their journal by reflecting on how they learn and explore.
- When finished, have the participants share and discuss their entries in small groups or as a class.

1.2 Activity: Self-Assessment

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on self-assessment.

1.2.1 Steps

- Have the participants complete **How Do You Assess Your Learning? (R40)** in their journal by reflecting on why it is important to perform regular self-checks.
- When finished, have the participants share and discuss their entries in small groups or as a class.

1.3 Activity: Self-Discovery

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on how they nurture self-discovery.

1.3.1 Steps

- Have the participants complete **How Do You Apply Self-Assessment Toward Self-Discovery? (R41)** in their journal by reflecting on why it is important to perform regular self-checks.
- When finished, have the participants share and discuss their entries in small groups or as a class.

Goal 2: Identify areas in which development of skills or additional knowledge is desired.

2.1 Activity: Assessing and Developing Skills

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on the skills necessary for their job and their confidence level with each.

2.1.1 Steps
- Have the participants complete **My Job Skills (R42)** in their journal.
- When finished, have the participants share and discuss their entries in small groups or as a class.

2.2 Activity: Balancing Your Job

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on how newly acquired skills will impact them.

2.2.1 Steps
- Have the participants complete the **My New Job Skills (R43)** in their journal.
- When finished, share with the groups that many authors have written about the importance of developing a balance in our jobs.
- Have the participants share and discuss their entries in small groups or as a class.

Goal 3: Identify specific supervision needs in light of personal skills and needs.

3.1 Activity: Supervising Me

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on how they prefer to be supervised, gain a better understanding of various forms of supervision, and reflect on ways to utilize each.

3.1.1 Steps

- Have the participants complete **How I Prefer to Be Supervised (R44)** in their journal.
- When finished, have the participants share and discuss their entries in small groups or as a class.

3.1.2 Discussion: Forms of Supervision

Facilitate a discussion about four forms of supervision.

- Checklists
  - ➥ Checklists contain items from your job description and from identified areas in your previous evaluations. A checklist may be helpful because you can prioritize the skills you would like to improve.
- Conversations
  - ➥ Conversations with your supervising teacher allow you to gather specific information about your growth process. They may include weekly planning meetings, daily or scheduled conversations, or more formal evaluations.
- Daily Log
  - ➥ A daily log is a place where you can record anecdotal comments, activities with short evaluations, insights, and creative ideas.
- Observing
  - ➥ Observe your supervising teacher. Keep a small notebook and record your thoughts and reactions.
- Have the participants complete **Ways of Supervising (R45)** in their journal.
- When finished, have the participants share and discuss their entries in small groups or as a class.

Goal 4: Identify choices for training opportunities and recognize the advantages and limitations of each.

4.1 Activity: Identifying Training Opportunities

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on how they prefer to learn and possible training opportunities.

4.1.1 Steps

- Have the participants complete **How I Prefer to Learn (R46)** in their journal.
- When finished, have the participants share and discuss their entries in small groups or as a class.

Goal 5: Create an action plan for personal growth and development.

5.1 Activity: Developing a Life-Long Learning Plan

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on the elements of this academy and apply them toward a plan for personal growth and development.

5.1.1 Steps
- Have the participants complete **A Life-Long Learning Plan (R47)** in their journal.
- When finished, have the participants share their entries in small groups or as a class.

Module D Handouts

Module D: Planning for Continued Growth and Development

1.   Conduct a self-analysis of job-related skills.

2.   Identify areas in which development of skills or additional knowledge is desired.

3.   Identify specific supervision needs in light of personal skills and needs.

4.   Identify choices for training opportunities and recognize the advantages and limitations of each.

5.   Create an action plan for personal growth and development.

Module D Transparencies

Module D: Planning for Continued Growth and Development

The PARA Center

- *Conduct a self-analysis of job-related skills.*

- *Identify areas in which development of skills or additional knowledge is desired.*

- *Identify specific supervision needs in light of personal skills and needs.*

- *Identify choices for training opportunities and recognize the advantages and limitations of each.*

- *Create an action plan for personal growth and development.*

Module E: Participating in the Evaluation Process

Personal Growth and Development Academy
Module E: Participating in the Evaluation Process

A. Module Goals

Using the **Module E: Participating in the Evaluation Process** handout and transparency **(H1/T1)**, review the goals of the module.

1. Describe the need for systematic, planned, purposeful feedback regarding job performance.
2. Identify the relationship between duties listed on job descriptions and the types of feedback needed.
3. Demonstrate use of self-evaluation methods.
4. Demonstrate effective ways of accepting and using constructive feedback from supervisors.
5. Design a personal plan for self-improvement based on job evaluations.

Goal 1: Describe the need for systematic, planned, purposeful feedback regarding job performance.

1.1 Activity: What is the Purpose of Feedback?

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on the ways in which feedback is helpful.

1.1.1 Steps
- Have the participants complete **Purposes of Feedback (R48)** in their journal.
- When finished, have the participants share and discuss their entries with the class.

1.2 Activity: Systematic Feedback

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on the ways in which they receive feedback.

1.2.1 Steps
- Have the participants complete **Systematic Feedback (R49)** in their journal.
- When finished, have the participants share and discuss their entries with the class.

1.3 Activity: Feedback Sessions

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on the ways in which they receive feedback from their supervising teacher.

1.3.1 Steps
- Have the participants complete **Feedback Sessions (R50)** in their journal.
- When finished, have the participants share and discuss their entries with the class.

Goal 2: Identify the relationship between duties listed on job descriptions and types of feedback needed.

2.1 Activity: Job Descriptions and Feedback

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on the duties they perform and the kind of feedback each needs.

2.1.1 Steps

- Have the participants complete **My Job Description (R51)** in their journal.
- When finished, have the participants share and discuss their entries in small groups or as a class.

Goal 3: Demonstrate use of self-evaluation methods.

3.1 Activity: Self-Evaluation

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on how they perform each of the duties in their job description.

3.1.1 Steps

- Referring back to **My Job Description (R51)**, have the participants complete **How am I Doing? (R52)** in their journal. They should develop a rubric for evaluating their performance, for example:
  - ➥ M = Mastered
  - ➥ CD = Continue to Develop
  - ➥ NT = Need Training
- When finished, have the participants share and discuss their evaluations in small groups or as a class.

3.2 Activity: Your Relationships With Your Students

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on and evaluate their relationships with their students.

3.2.1 Steps

- Have the participants complete **Valuable Student Feedback (R53)** in their journal.
- When finished, have the participants share and discuss their entries in small groups or as a class.

Goal 4: Demonstrate effective ways of accepting and using constructive feedback from supervisors.

4.1 Activity: Constructive Feedback

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to better understand constructive feedback.

4.1.1 Steps

- Have the participants complete **Constructive Feedback (R54)** in their journal.
- When finished, have the participants share and discuss their entries in small groups or as a class.

4.2 Activity: Active Listening

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to better understand active listening.

4.1.1 Steps

- Have the participants complete **Active Listening (R55)** in their journal.
- When finished, have the participants share and discuss their entries in small groups or as a class.

Goal 5: Design a personal plan for self-improvement based on job evaluations.

5.1 Activity: Planning for Self-Improvement

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on changes they would like to make in their jobs.

Note to Instructor: Obtain a copy of the school district's classified employee evaluation form used for paraeducators and review with the participants.

5.1.2 Steps

- Have the participants complete **Self-Improvement Plan Based on Job Evaluations (R56)** in their journals.
- When finished, have the participants share and discuss their plans with the class.

Module E Handouts

PARAprofessional Resource and Research Center, 1380 Lawrence Street, Suite 650, Denver, CO 80204
Phone: 303-556-6464 Fax: 303-556-6142   Website: http://paracenter.cudenver.edu

Module E: Participating in the Evaluation Process

1. Describe the need for systematic, planned, purposeful feedback regarding job performance.

2. Identify the relationship between duties listed on job descriptions and types of feedback needed.

3. Demonstrate use of self-evaluation methods.

4. Demonstrate effective ways of accepting and using constructive feedback from supervisors.

5. Design a personal plan for self-improvement based on job evaluations.

The PARA Center

Module E Transparencies

Module E: Participating in the Evaluation Process

The PARA Center

- *Describe the need for systematic, planned, purposeful feedback regarding job performance.*

- *Identify the relationship between duties listed on job descriptions and types of feedback needed.*

- *Demonstrate use of self-evaluation methods.*

- *Demonstrate effective ways of accepting and using constructive feedback from supervisors.*

- *Design a personal plan for self-improvement based on job evaluations.*

Personal Growth Through Emotion, Reflection, and Connection Reflection Journal

Sue Chandler
University of Colorado at Denver

The Roots of Reflection: The Story of Jill

A couple of years ago my child, who was a second grader at Banks Elementary, brought home a job announcement for a special education paraeducator. The first thought that popped into my head was that I am at Banks Elementary so often that I might as well be paid for it, and have the same vacation time as my kids. I really enjoy working with kids and all my life I thought I would be an elementary teacher. However, I worked in a bank for sixteen years and when I had my children I decided to stay home. I do not have a college degree, and at this point in my life I just want to be with my kids and not running off to class.

I applied for the paraeducator job and was hired on the spot. Within the next few weeks I was attending an orientation meeting with the special education teacher, Ellie. She said, "Jill, we are a full inclusion school and that will make your job interesting and hard." I found out that I would have to think on my toes, work with four different teachers, learn the language of special education, and be prepared for anything. Ellie assured me that I would feel comfortable and confident once I knew the students and other teachers.

Within one week of starting my new job I was having a difficult time teaching reading skills to Jack, a boy on my caseload. Every time I sat down with him he would hide under the desk, rip his papers, or talk nonstop. I tried taking away points on his behavior sheet, but he didn't react. I don't know if he didn't understand the classroom rules, didn't care about learning, or didn't like me. I decided I needed help, because I was beginning to dislike working with Jack. I asked Ellie for some strategies. She talked to me about setting consequences for Jack's behavior and the cloze reading strategy. I thought those were good ideas, but I didn't know anything about the cloze procedure and I thought the behavior sheet was setting consequences for Jack. Eventually we decided that I would work on developing a relationship with Jack that included more than the time I spent trying to teach him to read. I sought him out on the playground and in the lunchroom and would joke around with him. I let him know that I cared about him. I told him that my son, Brian, had reading problems and that I would read to him and he would fill in the words when I paused. I bought Jack a really neat bookmark and we started reading his chapter books together. We developed a friendship and trust for each other that enhanced his acquisition of reading skills.

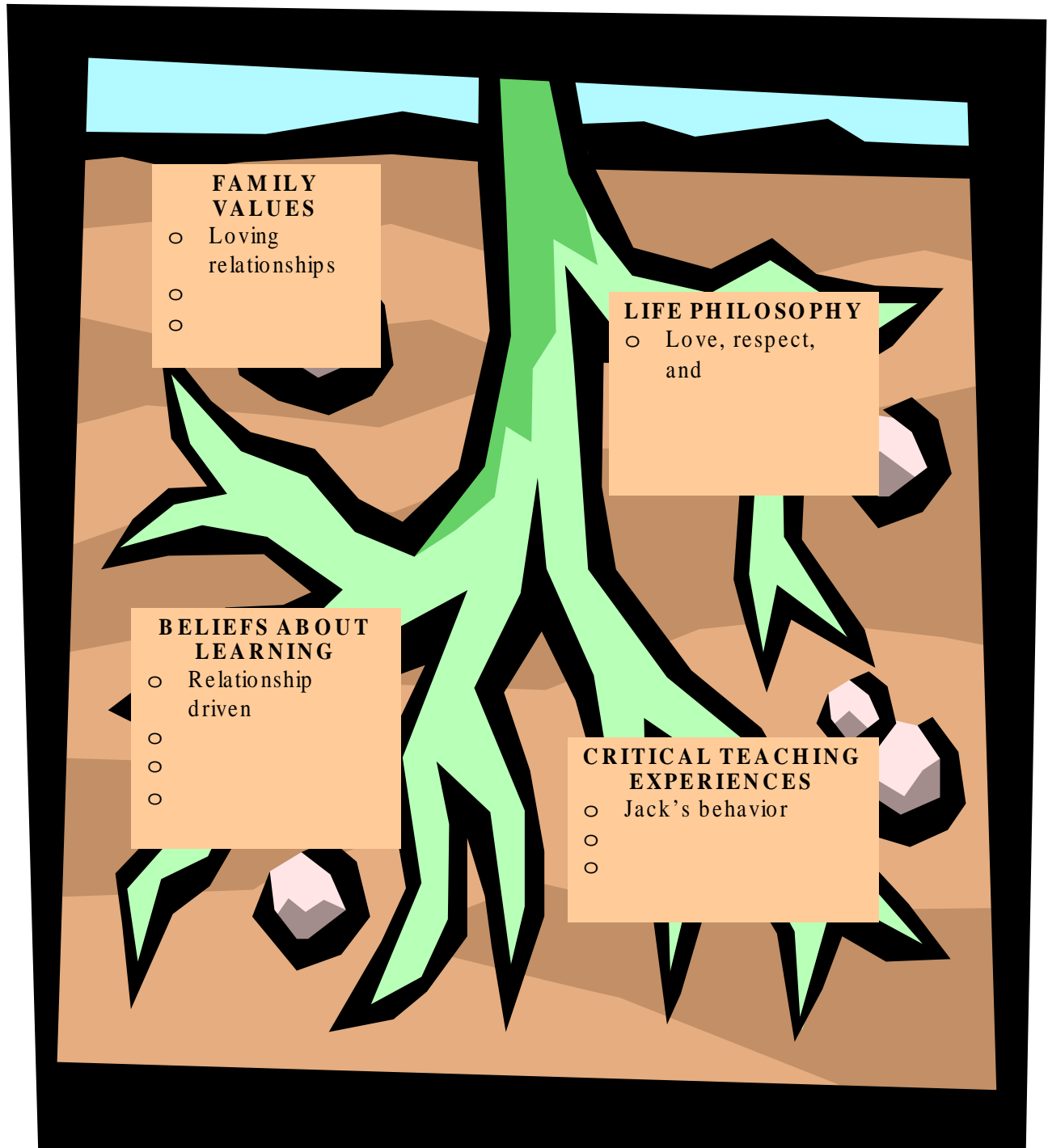## *The Roots of Reflection: The Story of Jill*
(continued)

I felt more confident in my abilities as a paraeducator, since I was able to have a successful relationship with Jack. If I had not talked to Ellie about the difficulties I was having with Jack I might not have developed a thriving connection with him. Ellie and I also deepened our professional bond by listening and respecting each other's ideas. Jack and Ellie taught me that I have to be reflective about my teaching. I learned that I needed to talk to my colleagues and students to broaden my knowledge and skills.

In hindsight, I never reflected about my job at the bank, even though I could have improved my customer service abilities. However, in the first year of being a paraeducator, I did informally reflect about my teaching and students when I was sitting in traffic, cooking dinner, digging in the garden, or taking a shower. But, I learned from Jack and Ellie that I needed to consciously seek out another paraeducator or teacher to reflect with me about how I teach and what students learn. For example, I started to ask, "How do students with behavior problems learn?" "How did I learn?" "How do graphic organizers affect their reading comprehension?" "How do I use graphic organizers in my reading?" "How does my relationship with a student affect their learning?" "How do relationships affect my learning and growth?"
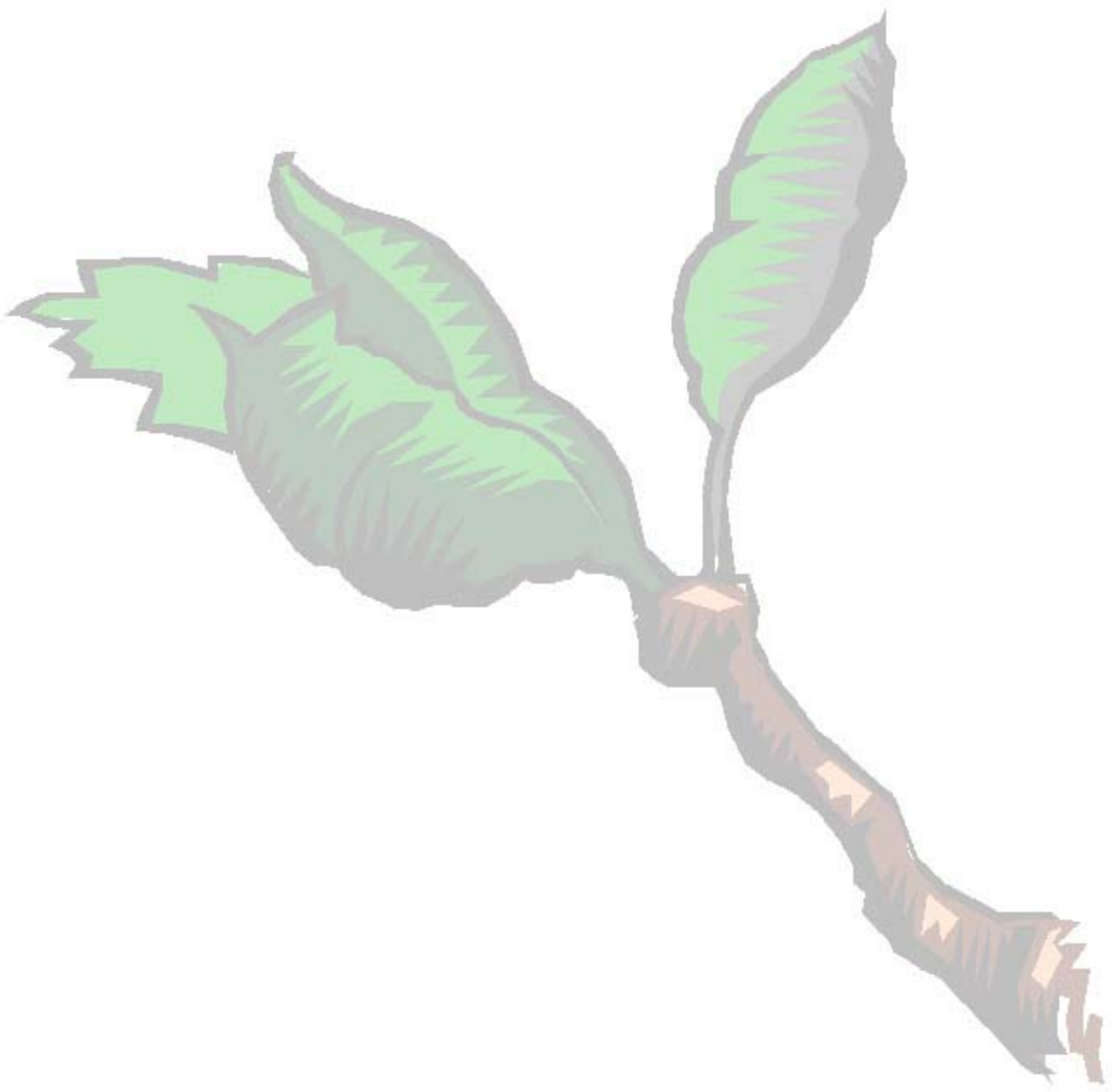
I genuinely enjoy my job as a paraeducator because I am able to reflect and talk about my teaching with other paraeducators and teachers. I am a valuable contributor to the education team and to all the students that I teach. Asking questions is a part of teaching and learning and no person has the magical answers. I feel that a part of the paraeducator profession should be asking teachers, paraeducators, parents, students, and friends to reflect with us about the issues in our teaching. It is a natural way for us to develop professionally, and that can only benefit the students we teach.

The PAR²A Center

Jill's Roots for Personal Growth

FAMILY VALUES
- Loving relationships
-
-

LIFE PHILOSOPHY
- Love, respect, and

BELIEFS ABOUT LEARNING
- Relationship driven
-
-
-
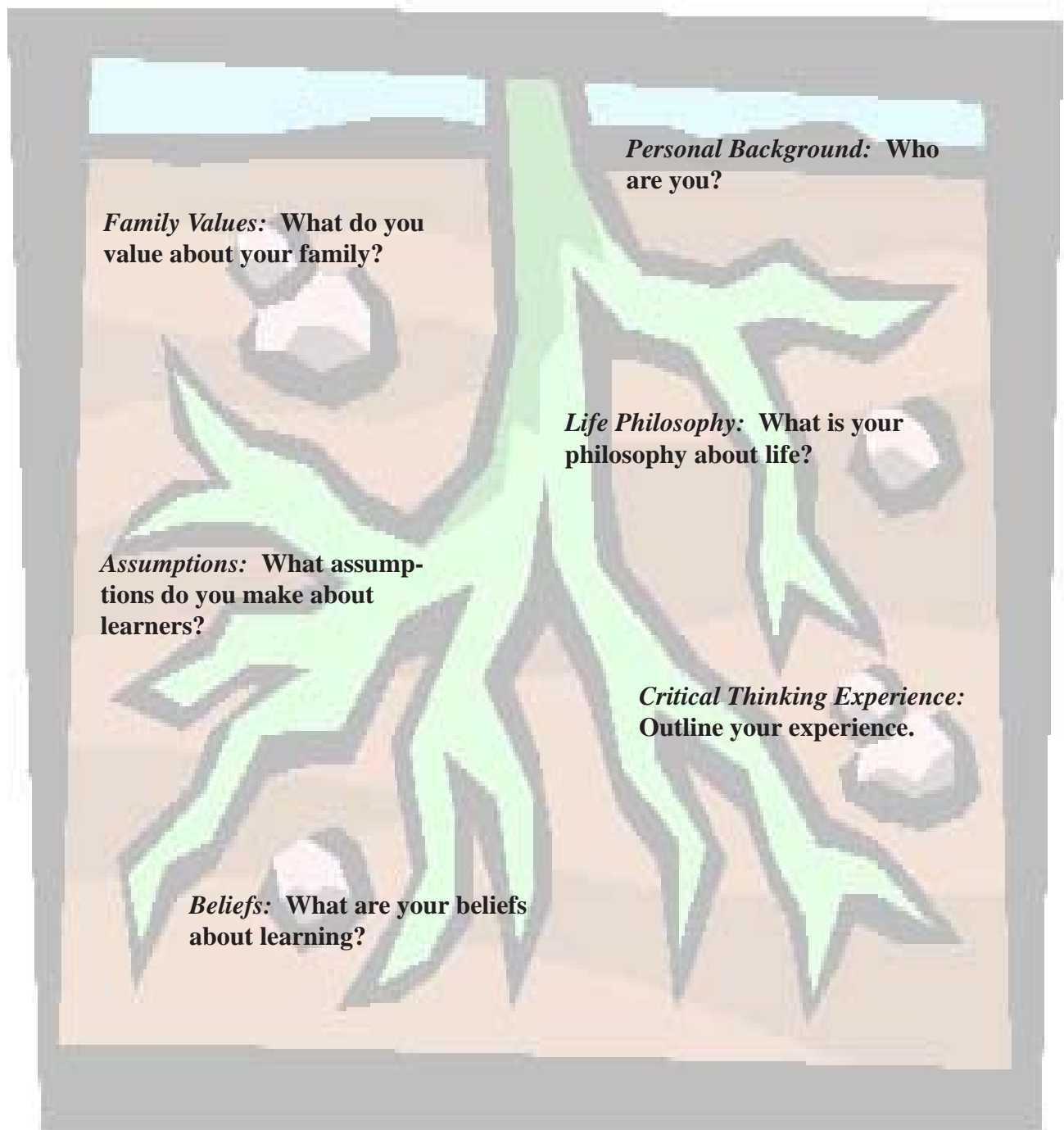
CRITICAL TEACHING EXPERIENCES
- Jack's behavior
-
-

What are Your Roots for Personal Growth?

What critical teaching incident has occurred in your paraeducator career that guided you to reflect with another paraeducator or teacher? Use the space below to write or draw your story.

Your Roots for Personal Growth

Personal Background: **Who are you?**

Family Values: **What do you value about your family?**

Life Philosophy: **What is your philosophy about life?**

Assumptions: **What assumptions do you make about learners?**

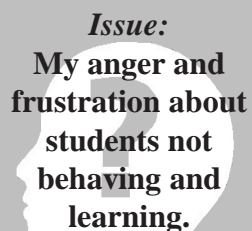*Critical Thinking Experience:* **Outline your experience.**

Beliefs: **What are your beliefs about learning?**

Beginning of Growth

Now that you know a little bit about me, and you have shared a little about yourself, I want to describe to you a recent journey of how reflective practice helped me to become a better paraeducator. Presently, I am teaching in an urban school district that serves an economically and racially diverse student population. The students on my caseload are typically African American males; I am a White female in my late thirties. Needless to say I have to reflect about my White middle class values and how they affect the work I do with students of diverse backgrounds.

For the past few weeks I have been having problems with four boys who cannot seem to remain engaged in an academic activity during a forty minute free-choice period. At times, they would sit and do nothing or they would fight with each other. My reaction to the boys was to get angry and frustrated. I was angry because they would not listen to me and I was frustrated because this was one time that they could make a choice about what they wanted to learn – as long as they were engaged in reading, writing, or math. I was so stressed out about the situation that I finally sent them all to the office on a referral.

Issue:
My anger and frustration about students not behaving and learning.

The Trunk

So, I asked myself, "What went wrong? Why am I so angry, frustrated, and stressed?"

What skills do I need to learn?

Self-Reflective Questions

Is it time to go back to the bank?

What did I do right?

What did I do wrong?

I thought the boys should be self-directed.

Maybe boys cannot work together.

Do they need more structure?

Do they not care about learning?
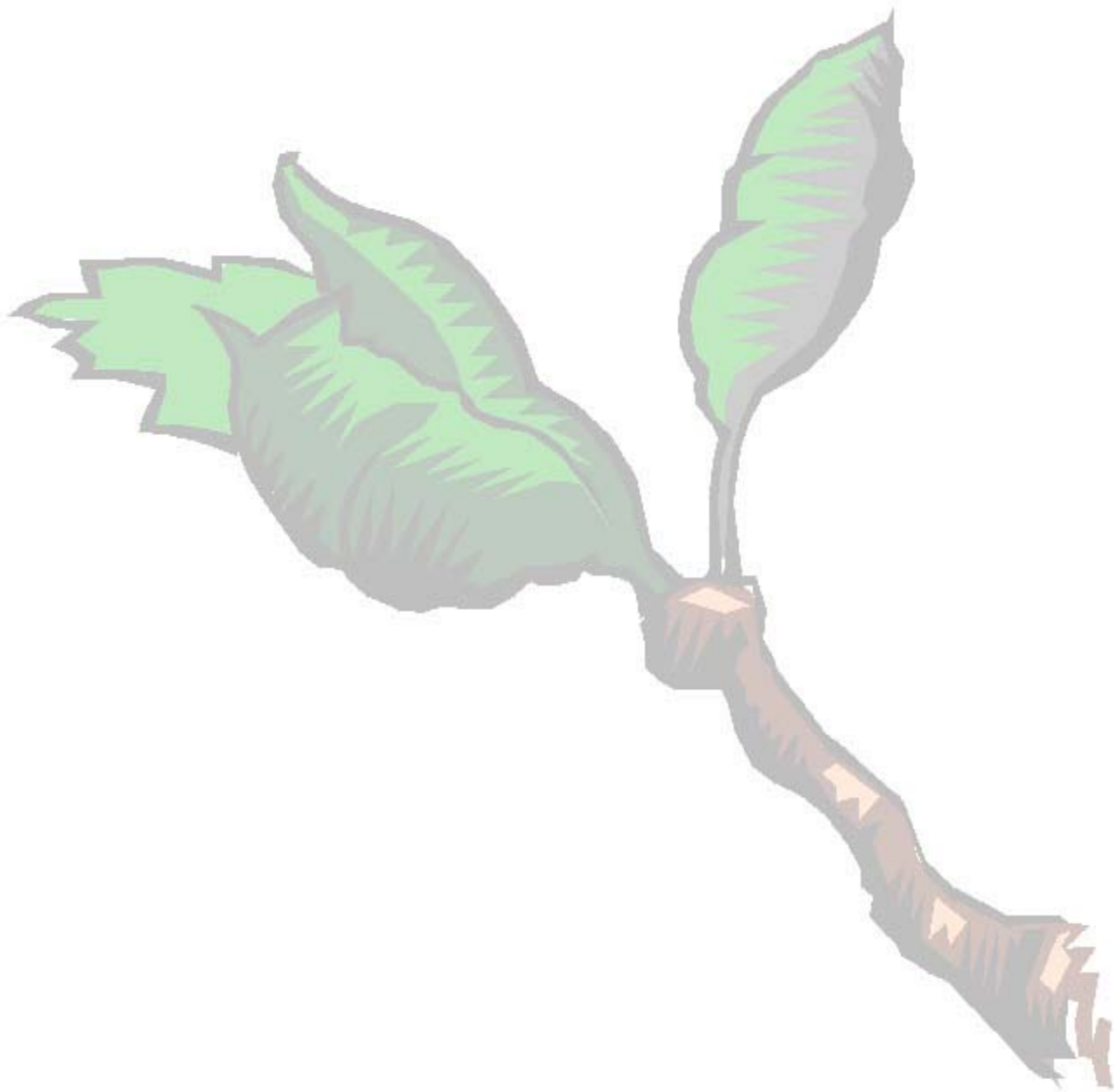
Should I have sent them to the office?

Do they not like me?

Is forty minutes too long for free-choice?
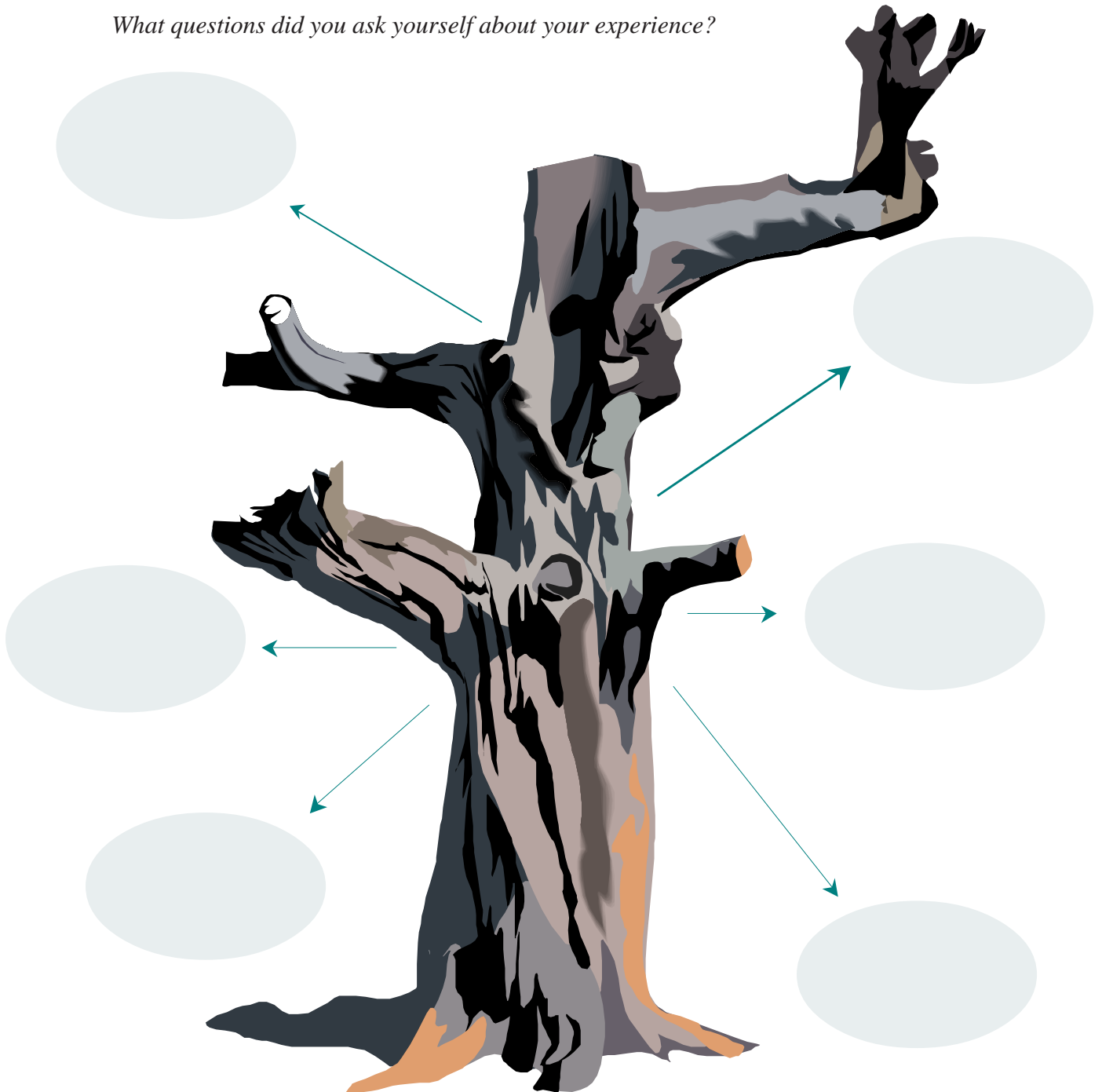
What are they learning?

How are You Growing?

Describe an experience in your teaching history when you encountered an unexpected student reaction.
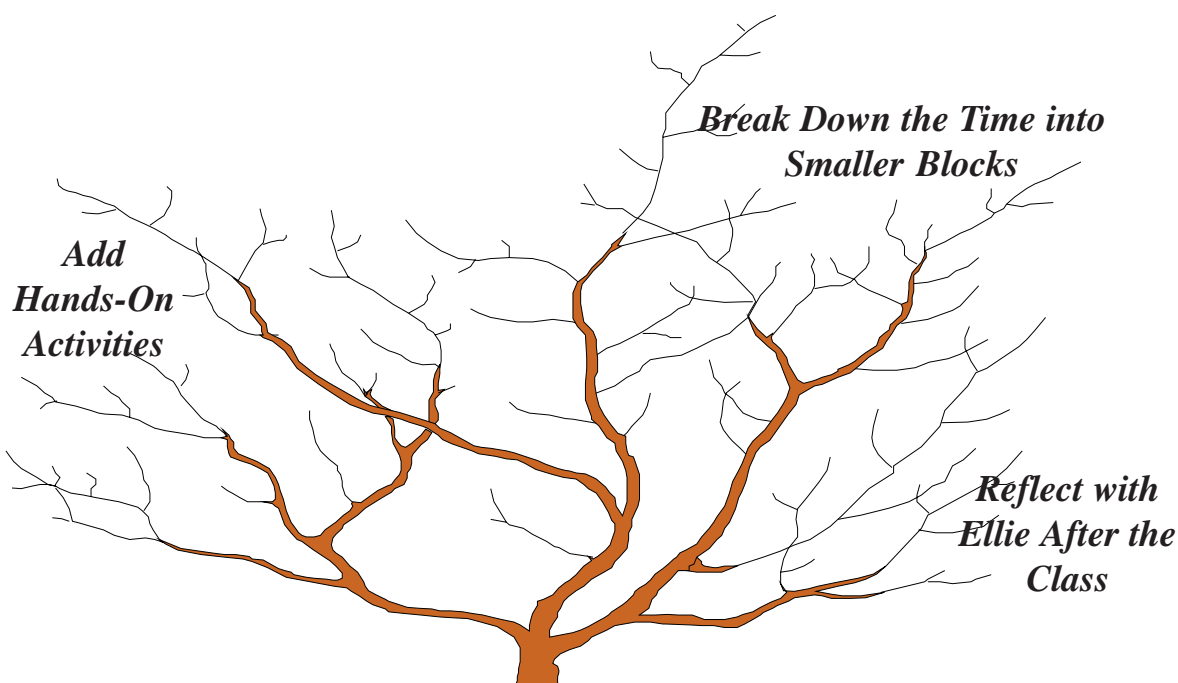
Your Trunk

What questions did you ask yourself about your experience?

A Branch: Jill's Continuing Story of Personal Growth

The first thing I did was to talk to Ellie, other paraeducators, and the students about what was happening with the forty-minute free-choice period. Ellie and I reflected about how these third grade boys had high energy and wanted to have hands-on activities for part of the block. We decided to divide the time into three shorter blocks. The first ten minutes would be spent discussing the activities and behavioral expectations. The next twenty minutes students would be engaged in hands-on activities, and the last ten minutes would consist of discussion of the activity and cleanup. Ellie and I co-taught the class until the class time was structured and the students understood the behavioral expectations. We decided the goals for the class were:

- *Making meaningful connections to content areas.*
- *Communicating concepts verbally.*
- *Writing and speaking effectively.*

Data Collection

Break Down the Time into Smaller Blocks

Add Hands-On Activities

Reflect with Ellie After the Class

Your Branch

What actions did you take to understand your experience?
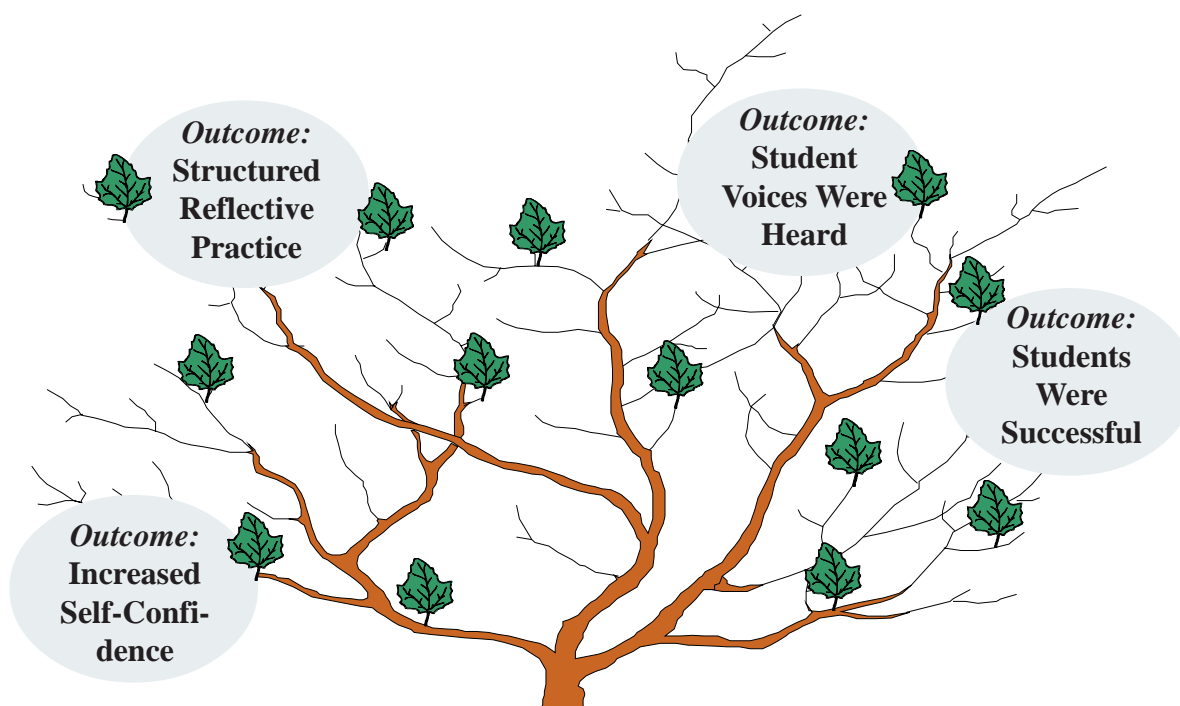
Action:

Action:

Action:

Action:

A Leaf: Jill's Continuing Story of Personal Growth

We learned more about the students after we asked them what they needed and we reflected about their answers. Once Ellie and I put a structure into place and she modeled various small group teaching strategies for me the students became successful.
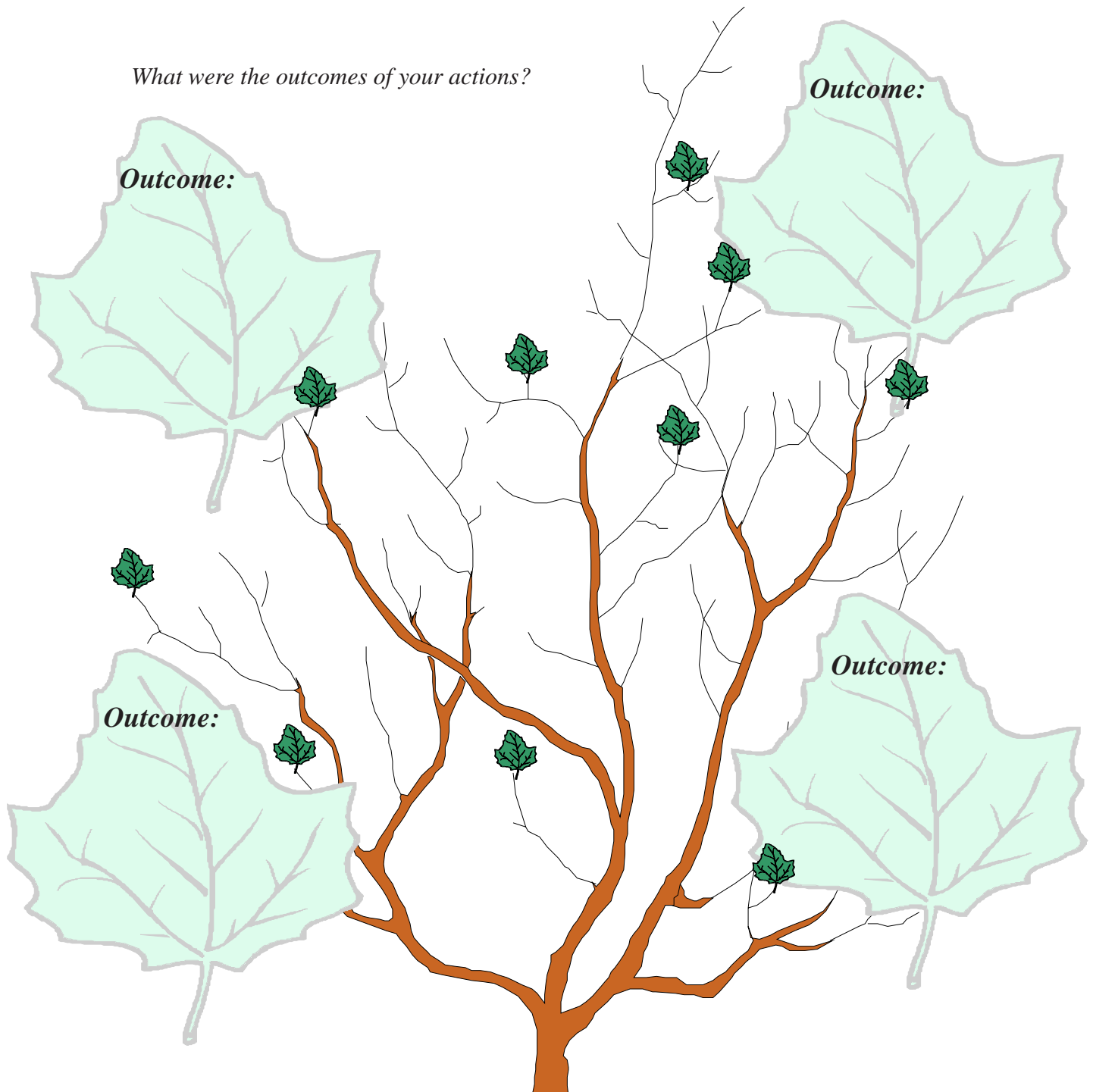
- ■ *We asked the students how they would like the class to be structured.*
- ■ *We developed hands-on activities with student feedback.*
- ■ *We divided the time into smaller blocks.*
- ■ *We incorporated a ten minute reflective time after the class.*

The students became more engaged in learning because of student input, hands-on activities, and stated behavioral expectations. I learned that I cannot assume that all students understand each teacher's behavioral expectations and the goals for the lesson without directly telling them – each time.

Outcome:
Structured Reflective Practice

Outcome:
Student Voices Were Heard

Outcome:
Students Were Successful

Outcome:
Increased Self-Confidence

Your Leaves

What were the outcomes of your actions?

Outcome:

Outcome:

Outcome:

Outcome:

Branching Out: Intuition and Personal Experience

Once I started reflecting about what was happening with my teaching and learning I felt the need to share my thoughts with other teachers and paraeducators. I wanted to structure a time during the week to reflect with other professionals. Many times paraeducators intuitively know that students are not learning – what we want them to know anyway! I wondered what other gaps the students on my caseload had in their learning. I concentrated on reading, because I was hired to work with students on their reading comprehension and strategies. Ellie and I asked the students if they understood what they were reading. The students discussed their reading skills and their ability to understand or find meaning in various forms of print. We found that comprehension was severely lacking.

Issue:
Comprehension

I could relate to this predicament having been a poor reader myself. I started to think about the successful reading strategies I used as a young reader. Ellie and I discussed many reading strategies and systematically began to teach them to the students. I noticed that they began asking more questions about the content, and they were able explain the author's point of view to each other.

CONNECTION

Are You Branching Out?

What questions do you reflect about with other people?

Question:

Question:

Question:

Question:

Trust: A Nutrient of Growth

The experience of reflecting about students and their difficulty with reading comprehension led me to ask more questions about what support students needed with reading. I needed to find out if other paraeducators were having the same difficult experiences with their students. I did not bring my questions to the team meeting because the teachers did not discuss reading comprehension, and I was only a paraeducator. Why would I bring up questions about reading?

Stressors
- **Lack of relationships, collegiality, respect, and trust.**
- **Underlying power structures.**
- **School structures.**

In addition, I felt vulnerable and stressed because I did not have in-depth knowledge of reading and I thought the teachers would think I was silly. They went to school to learn about reading and my job was to implement their ideas and strategies. I was uncomfortable asking them for more help. So, I brought the issues to a group of paraeducators because I felt safe and supported with them. I shared the reading strategies that Ellie had taught me and this led to a para team discussion on:

- *What reading strategies are we teaching students?*
- *What strategies are working well?*
- *How do you know when a student is making progress?*

Data Collection

We decided we should all share the highlights of our reflective conversations with the grade level teachers.

AIR *is a nutrient that provides the tree the necessary raw materials to grow. For personal growth to take place trust, like air, must be present.*

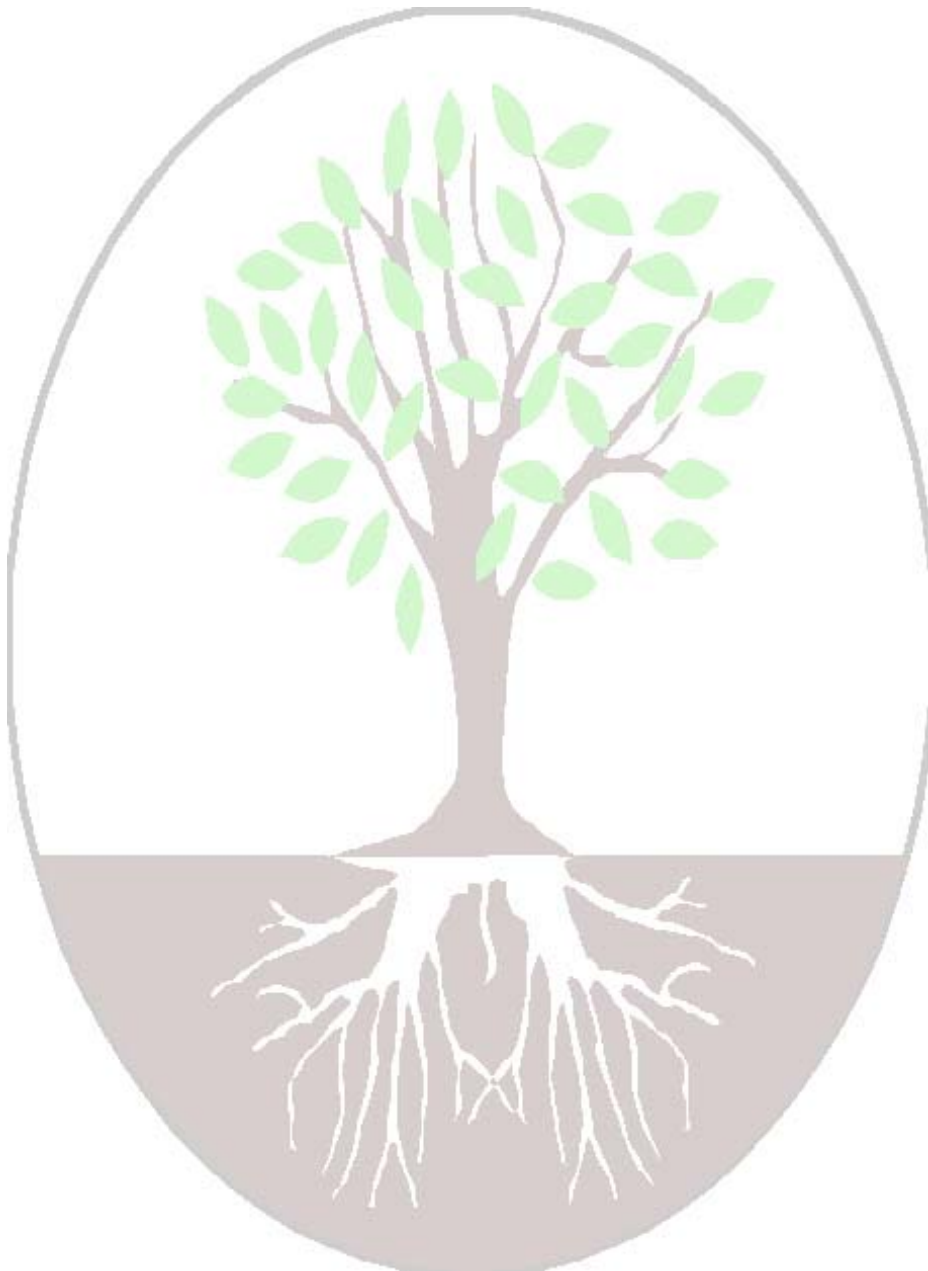## Is the Nutrient of Trust Present?

What are Jill's sources of stress?

What type of environment does Jill need to feel safe?

How does Jill find a trusting place to bring her questions and reflections?

How does Jill nurture a trusting environment to share her ideas?

Is Trust a Nutrient of Your Growth?

Write or draw about a stressful incident that caused you to change your actions.

Is the Nutrient of Trust Present?

How do you react to stress?

How do you manage stress?

Where are the trusting places you bring your questions and reflections?

How can you find a trusting environment to share your ideas?

How do you nurture a trusting environment to share your ideas and listen to other's ideas?

Community: A Nutrient for Growth

Our para team thought if we could connect and have conversations about what we were doing with our students then we could develop our teaching skills and lower our stress level. We wanted to grow professionally in a nurturing environment. We asked the teachers on our teams if they would meet twice a month with us for an hour conversation. We knew this request was an incredible commitment considering how busy teachers are during the week. Some of the teachers were resistive to meeting because they were busy with other obligations. Also, a few paraeducators decided not to join us because their teachers were not involved; they felt the time would not be productive. After we met the first couple of times we invited the vice principal, because she showed an interest in our conversations. One of our goals was to try to embed these conversations during the work day. We were willing to meet after school, however we believe that personal growth should be supported on a daily basis.
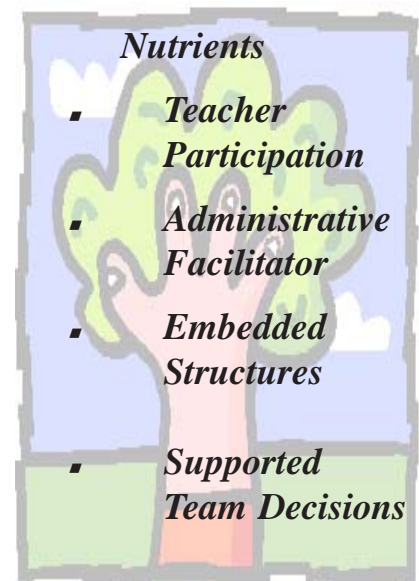
Pests/Growth Inhibitors

- *Individual Resistance*
- *Unstructured Conversation*
- *Resistive Structures*

Our group considered a variety of forums in which we could have structured conversations with each other:

- **Book Group:** *Individuals are committed to reading and discussing a selected book.*
- **Video Tapes:** *Individuals view and reflect upon their instruction and teaching practices.*
- **Research a Question:** *Individuals focus on a specific question to reflect upon and gather information.*
- **Study Group:** *Individuals gather together to examine a topic they have agreed upon.*
- **Peer Coaching:** *Individuals learn from one another through observation and thinking together about students.*
- **Examine Student Work:** *Individuals talk about student work.*
- **Case Study:** *Individuals talk about real world examples of teaching.*

Community: A Nutrient for Growth
(continued)

We discovered that our group connected the best by having conversations about student work. We talked about the student's efforts in regard to our assumptions about the learner's abilities, background knowledge, the lesson, and our own instruction. These conversations really helped me to think about myself as a learner and to scrutinize why I think the way I think. Hearing other paras and teachers talk about their concerns, frustrations, and successes helped me to more clearly define my own beliefs and values about kids and education. Now, when I get frustrated with a student or with a colleague I think about what words would be the most helpful for the circumstances and our relationship. I don't automatically react to my feelings of stress or frustration. Sometimes I have to wait until the next day when I am calm to talk about the situation. This time helps me to think about what is best for everyone involved.

Nutrients

- **Teacher Participation**
- **Administrative Facilitator**
- **Embedded Structures**
- **Supported Team Decisions**

What is the Moisture Level?

What is your community support to engage in personal growth conversations?

Draw an arrow to the picture that indicates your community support (moisture) level.
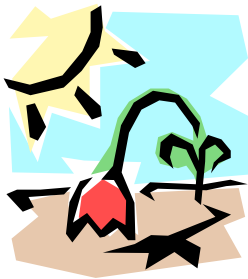
Drought

Balanced Rainfall

Flood

How do you use your emotions in your work?

How do you understand others' needs and points of view?

How do you use your personal experiences in your work?

How do you engage in conversations with other teachers and paraeducators when you are stressed?

Community Structure: A Nutrient of Growth

Three paraeducators, including me, two teachers, and the vice principal participated in the personal growth group. During our first conversation we discovered that we had some essential needs. First, we needed to have food and drinks. Second, we needed about ten minutes to vent and talk about our families before we could start talking about the selected topic. Third, each member of the group took a turn facilitating the conversation.

During four months of discussion we were able to (yes, it did take that long):
- Dedicate the time (2 hours monthly).
- Norm our group dialogues.
- Disagree with each other.
- Trust the process of conversation.
- Live with ambiguity when we didn't know where the conversation would lead.
- Develop flexible structures.
- Take action in our lives.
- Use humor to understand.

Benefits of Reflection:
- *Collegiality*
- *Trust*
- *Support Network*
- *Confidence*

In our first conversation we found that it was difficult to have an in-depth conversation. We structured the next two meetings to build relationships and connections with each other. By the third meeting we had to create simple organizers in our journals to guide our conversations. We also had to make sure that each person had a chance to speak. After three months, we felt connected enough to comfortably agree and disagree with each other about our life philosophies and assumptions about living. We were able to discuss ambiguous concepts such as freedom – what it meant and felt like in our lives.

Feelings

Confusion
Irritation
Ambiguity
Frustration

Connected
Alignment
Rejuvenation
Progress

Community Structure: A Nutrient of Growth
(continued)

We are still having the conversation about why freedom is or is not, and which types of freedom are or are not beneficial for elementary students. As a group we are beginning to examine how we teach for common themes and skills, so we can implement some of our ideas into our relationships with students. Through these conversations we developed a support system. We feel more secure in approaching other teachers and paraeducators and asking them questions about our areas of concern. Most teachers and paraeducators are very pleased to join in a conversation, however, we have also found that some of our peers do not want to interact in these dialogues.
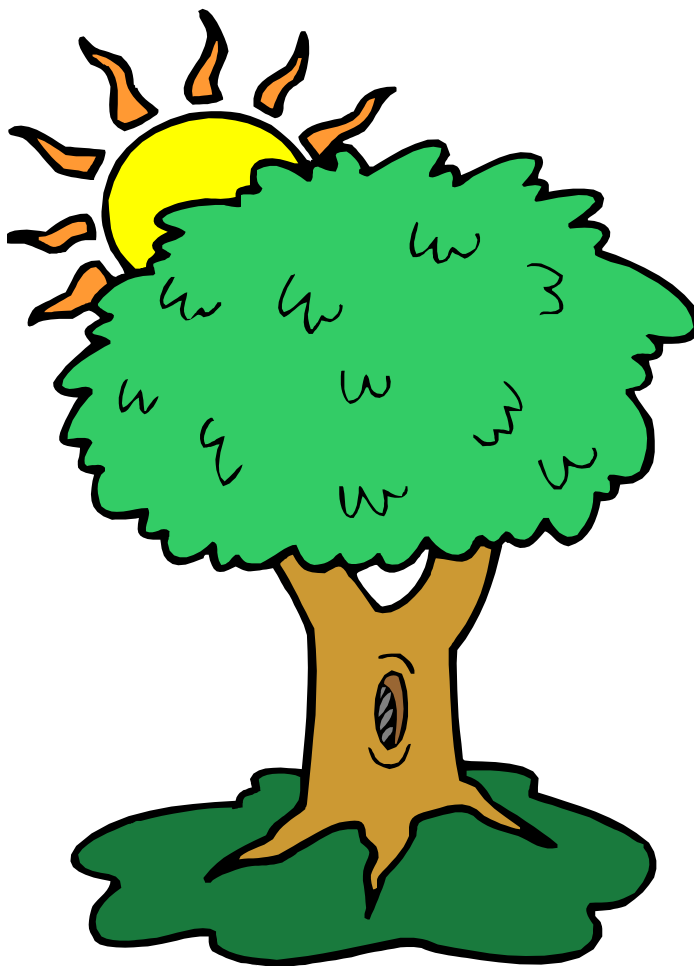
SUN is the nutrient that provides the energy for the tree. Community structures, like the sun, support personal growth.

What is the Community Forecast?

What are the structures in your community that support personal growth and relieve stress?

Structures That Support Growth:

Structures That Inhibit Growth:
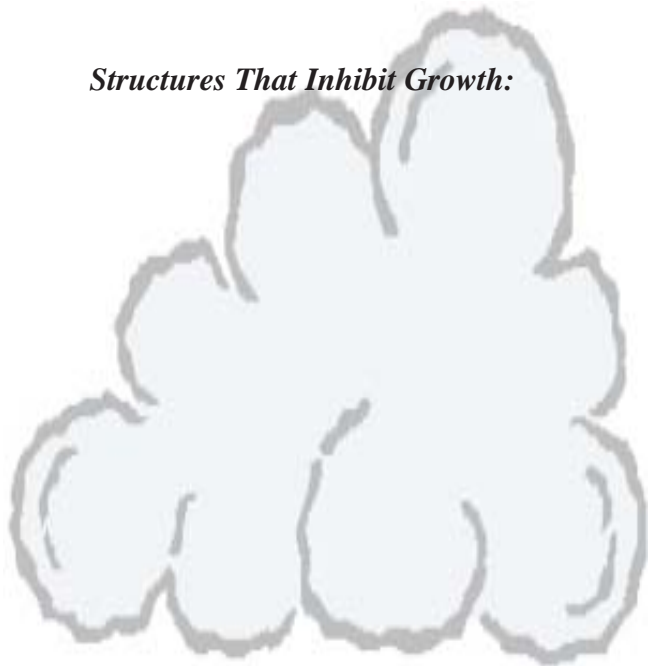
Your Climate Control

What is your personal reflective climate for personal growth? Circle the appropriate temperature.

Warm

Hot   **Cold**
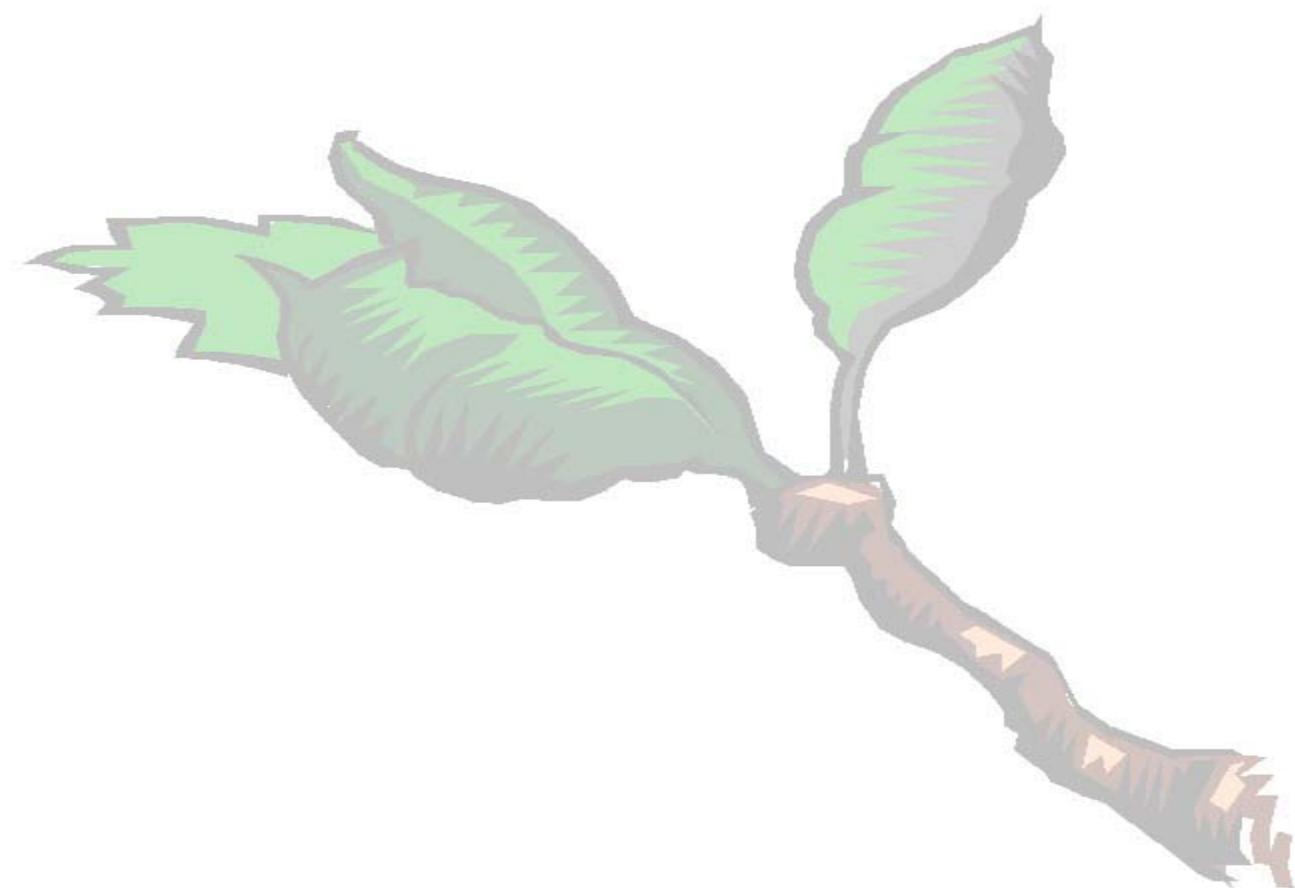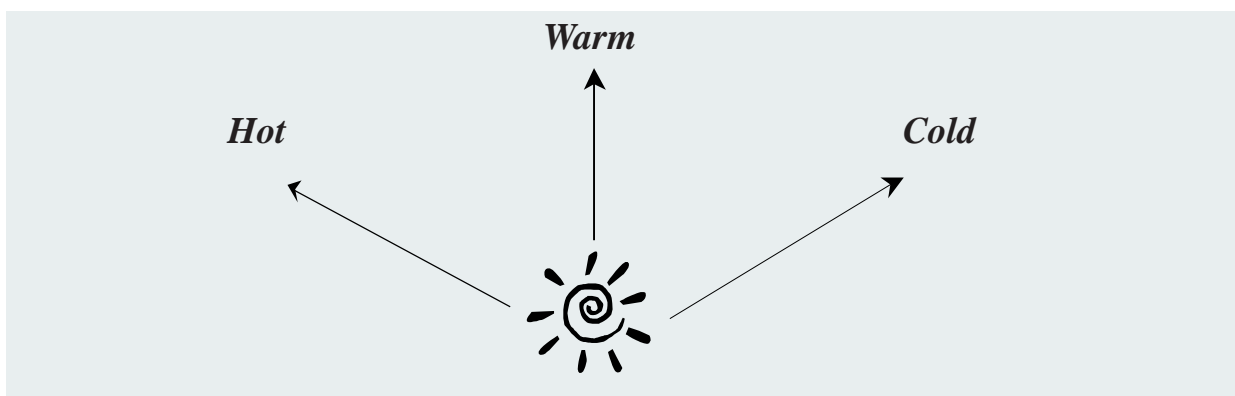
Growing

My journey into conscious personal growth is just beginning. My questions always lead me to ask more questions. Teaching in a reflective way has supported me in becoming a better paraeducator. It is a way for me to participate in ongoing professional development that is pertinent to my issues and interests. Writing my story has helped me to realize that the paraeducator profession is exciting, and that my day-to-day experiences impact my future talents. I hope that my story helps you to think about your own personal growth.

What I Need

I had an "a-ha" at school today. I said to myself, "Jill, you are not happy in your job. If you want to be a paraeducator then enjoy yourself, the kids, and the other adults. I mean, it is not like I am making a lot of money here! There is no need to suffer. Start having a good time." After I had a chat with myself I decided to write down the issues that were blocking my effectiveness.
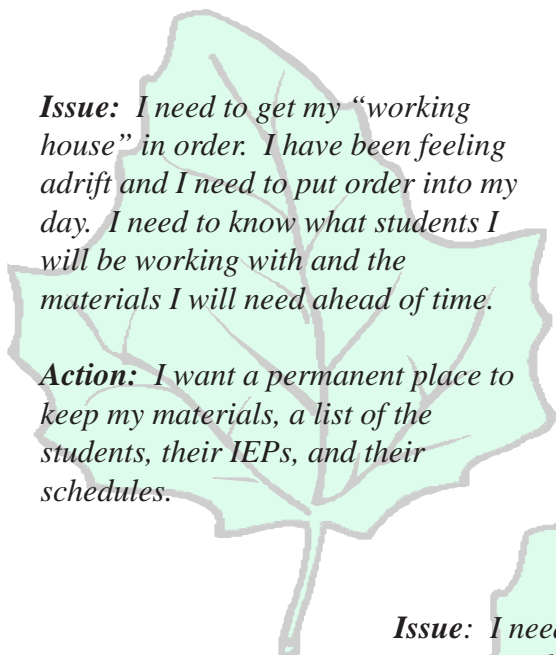
First, I felt like I was always rushing around from student to student not knowing exactly what I was suppose to be doing. I had a broad idea what the general education teachers were doing in their classrooms, however I was consistently modifying on the spot so that the students could interact with the lesson. I also was not carrying their IEPs with me, so I only had a general idea of what each student's objective should be for the lesson. And, I rarely had the materials I needed available to me that could help the students.

Second, I was not feeling successful with the students. Their progress was slow and I did not seem to be tracking it very well. I was starting to get a negative attitude with the students because I did not feel valuable. I was questioning my abilities to work with students.

Third, my perceived inadequacy with myself overflowed into my relationships with other teachers and paraeducators because I felt so unhappy. Now, I know I have some very good qualities. I am very creative and I try to listen to my intuition and innate ideas, but lately I have felt very stuck. I need to be able to work with the students as well as create with them.
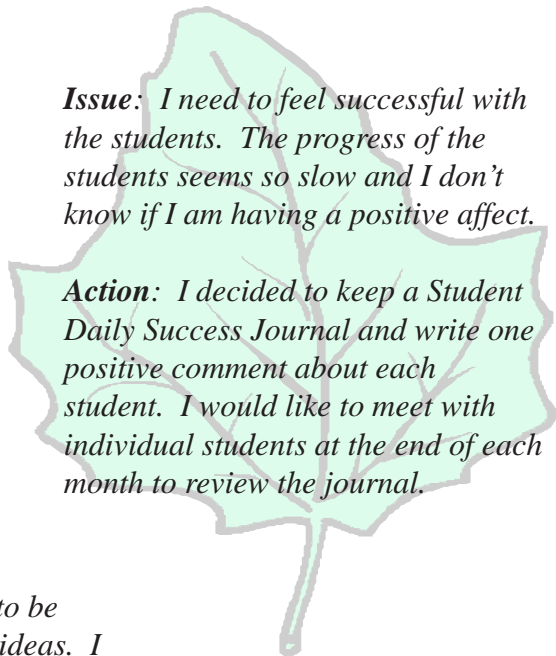
My Possibilities

I kept a journal of what I did on a weekly basis. (You know, I don't really like to journal, but once I started to write I found it easy to keep going and I felt better.) As I reread my journal entries I found out some interesting issues about myself and my work. I clustered them below:

Issue: *I need to get my "working house" in order. I have been feeling adrift and I need to put order into my day. I need to know what students I will be working with and the materials I will need ahead of time.*

Action: *I want a permanent place to keep my materials, a list of the students, their IEPs, and their schedules.*

Issue: *I need to feel successful with the students. The progress of the students seems so slow and I don't know if I am having a positive affect.*

Action: *I decided to keep a Student Daily Success Journal and write one positive comment about each student. I would like to meet with individual students at the end of each month to review the journal.*

Issue: *I need a safe place to be creative and to try my new ideas. I want to be able to share my thoughts with other people so I can create more.*

Action: *I will talk to Ellie about my ideas and then try them with a small group of students that I tutor in reading.*

What do I Need?
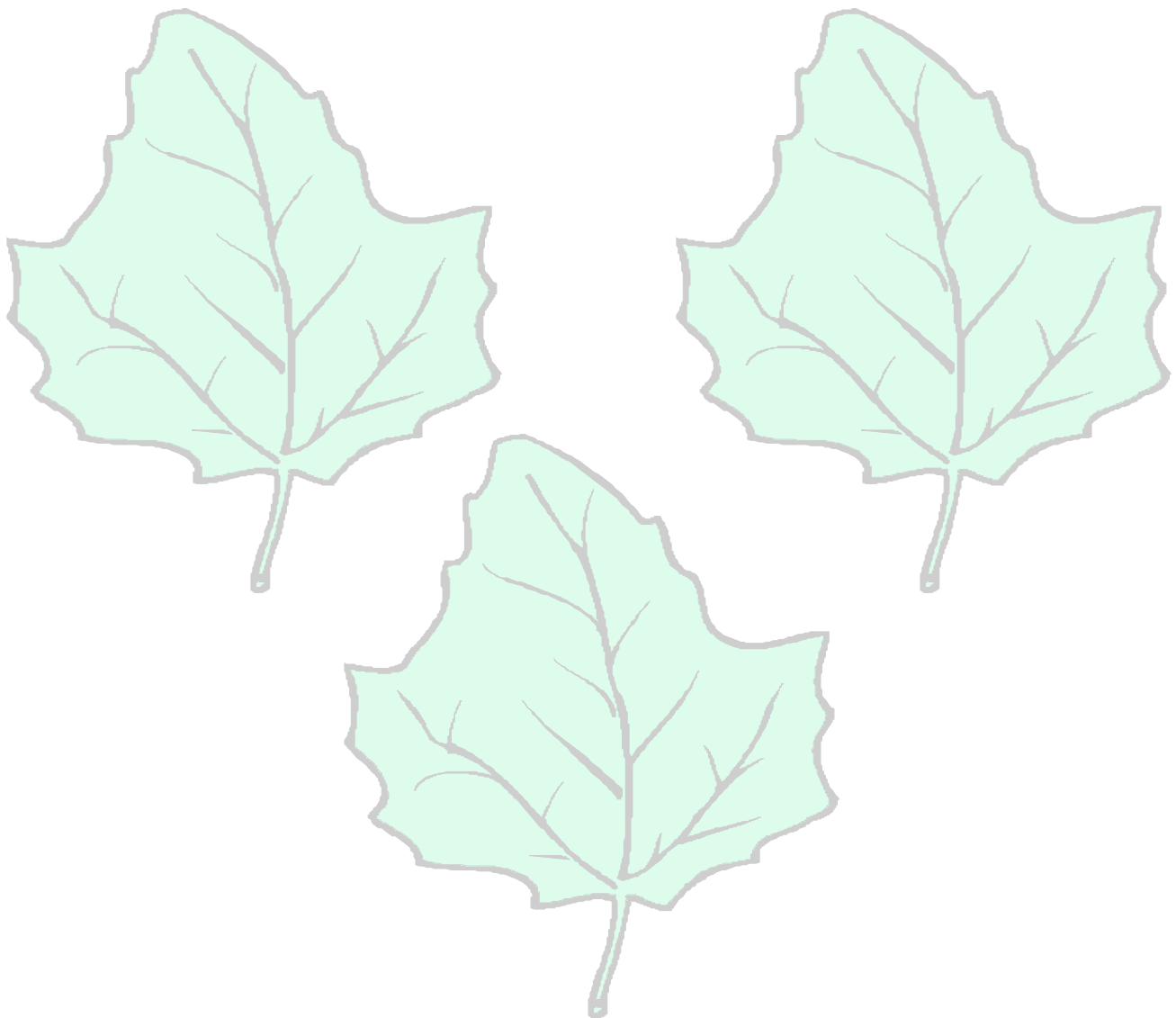
Write or draw about the situations, schedules, or systems that block you from reaching your full creative potential.
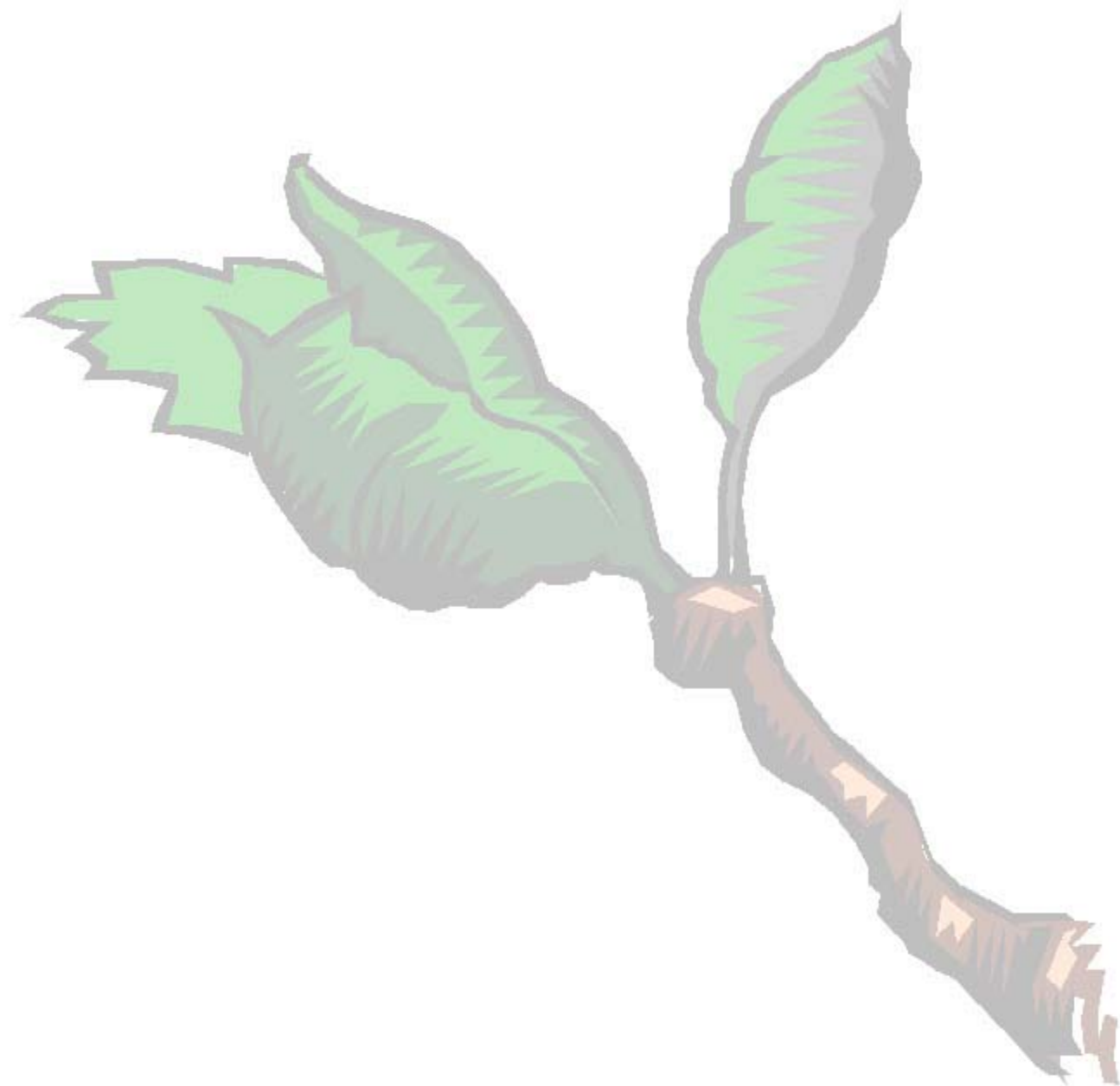
What are My Possibilities?

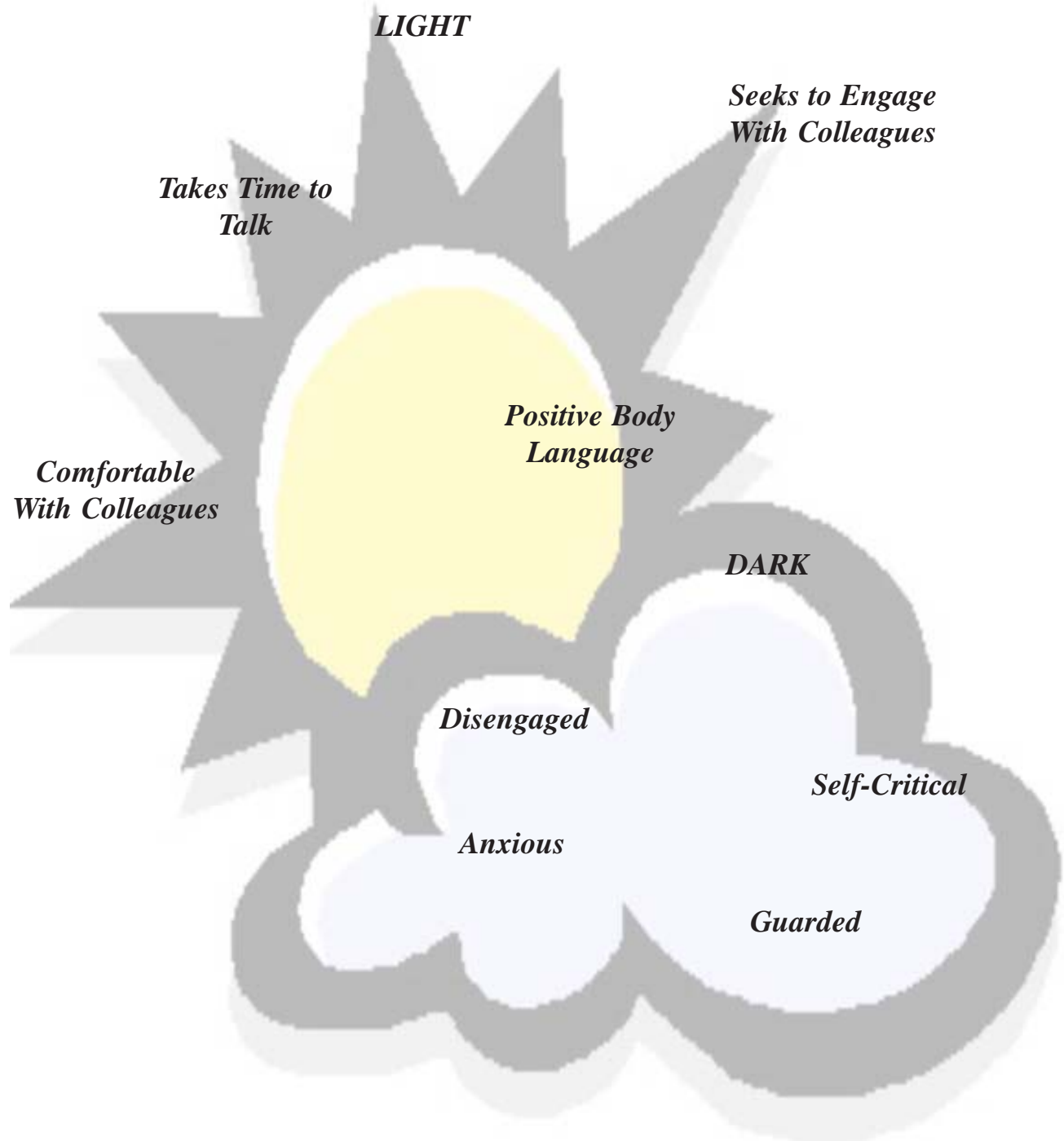*Imagine and consider possibilities for your creativity to emerge and be deeply rooted into your work.*

Why Self-Assessment?

HOW DO YOU LEARN AND EXPLORE?

How Do I Have Conversations With People?

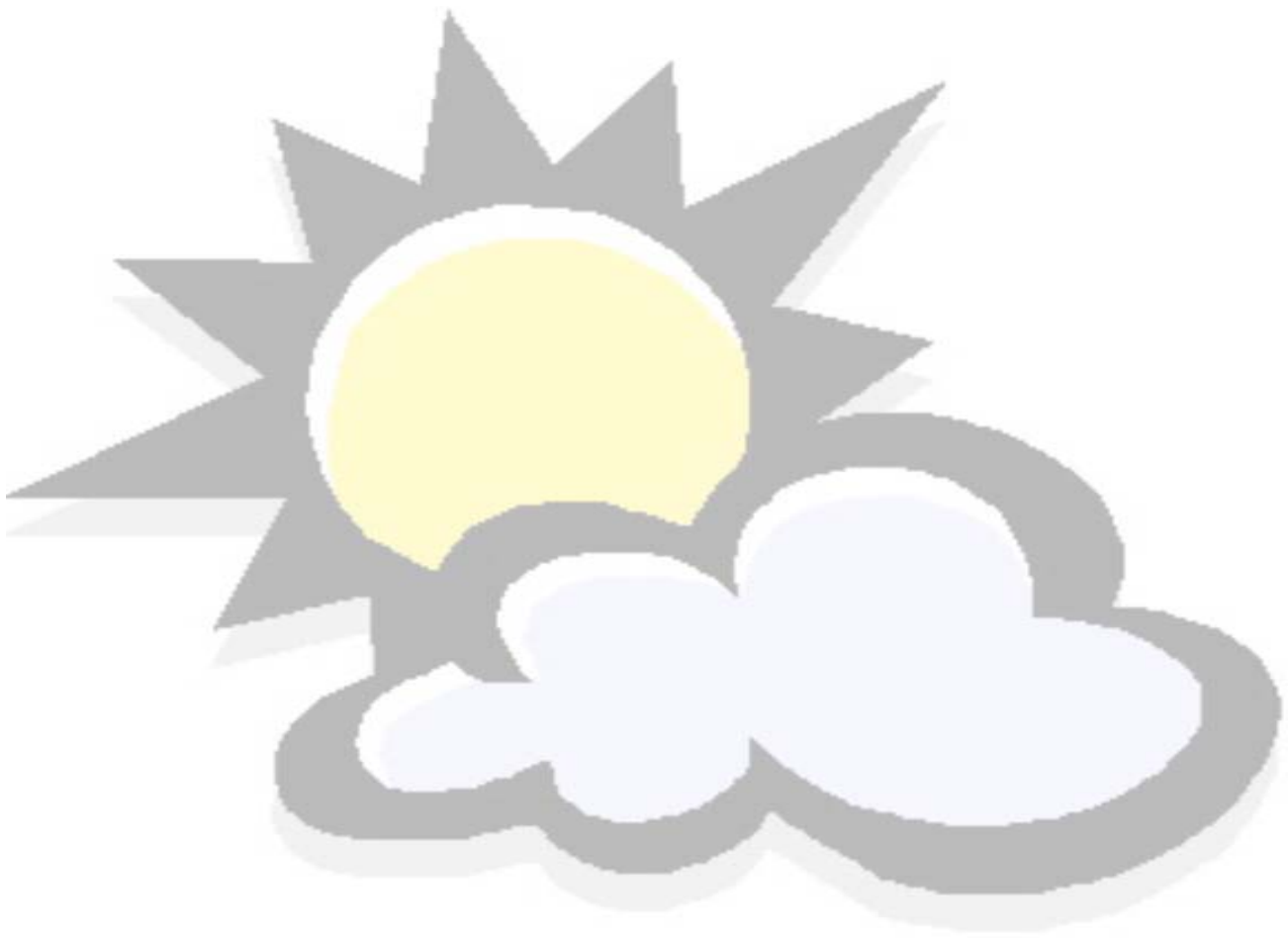**ENERGETIC**

LIGHT

Seeks to Engage With Colleagues

Takes Time to Talk

Positive Body Language

Comfortable With Colleagues

DARK

Disengaged

Self-Critical

Anxious

Guarded

How Can I Be More Thoughtful in My Conversations?

Write, list, or draw your conversational strengths in the sun. These are areas you rely on without even thinking about them, but for right now, think about them. Under each strength write the situations in which you have this feeling. How can you make these emotions more potent at home and at work?

Now write, list, or draw your conversational need areas in the cloud. These areas may be problematic for you. Under each need write the situations in which you have the feeling. Now, think about how you honor the feeling and how you can help yourself feel empowered in the conversation.
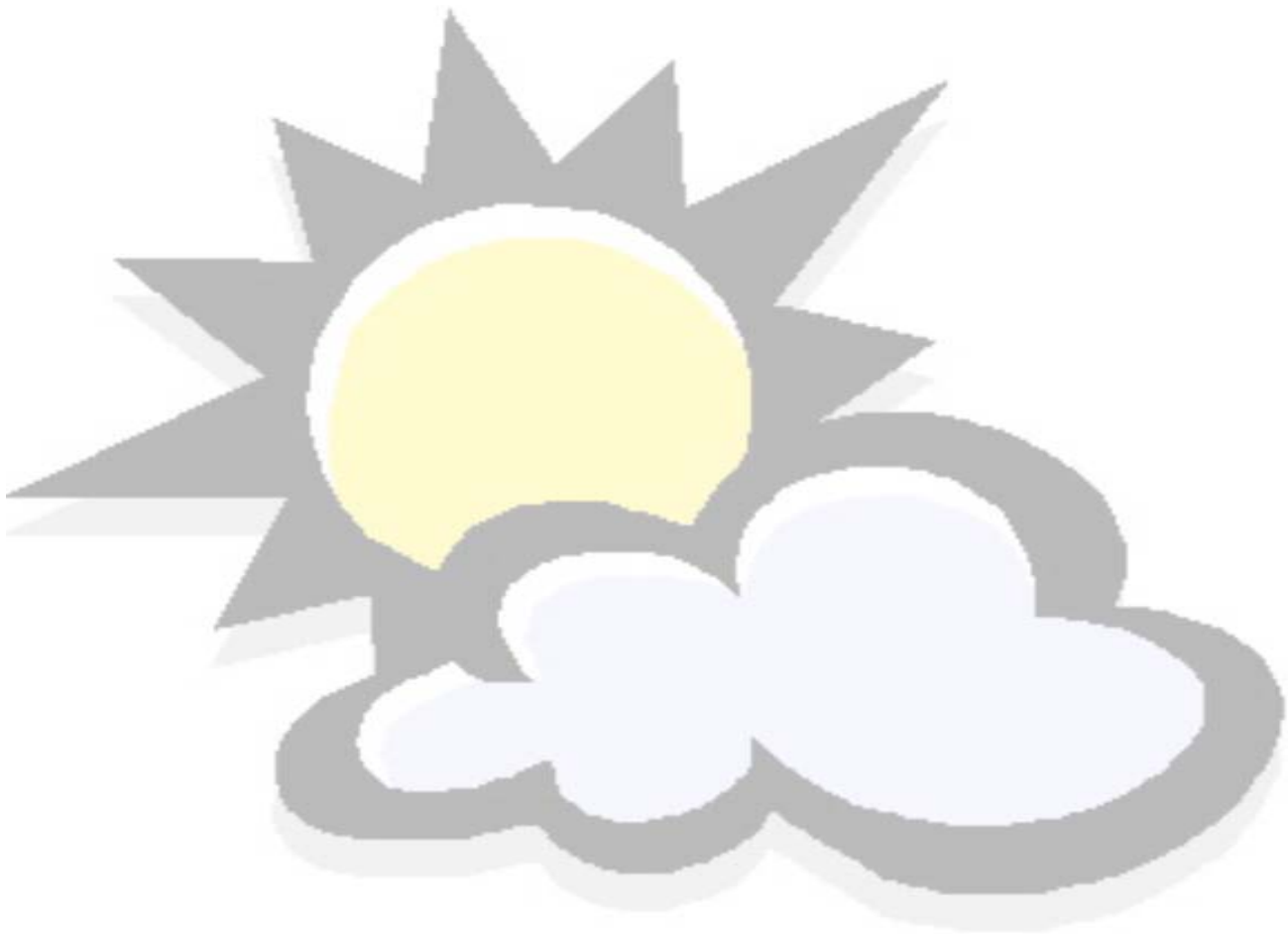
How Do I Make Connections With People?

PERSISTENT

LIGHT

Sustains Conversations

Maintains Focus

Seeks to Understand

Seeks to Be Understood

DARK

Stubborn

Distractible

Short-Sighted

Scattered
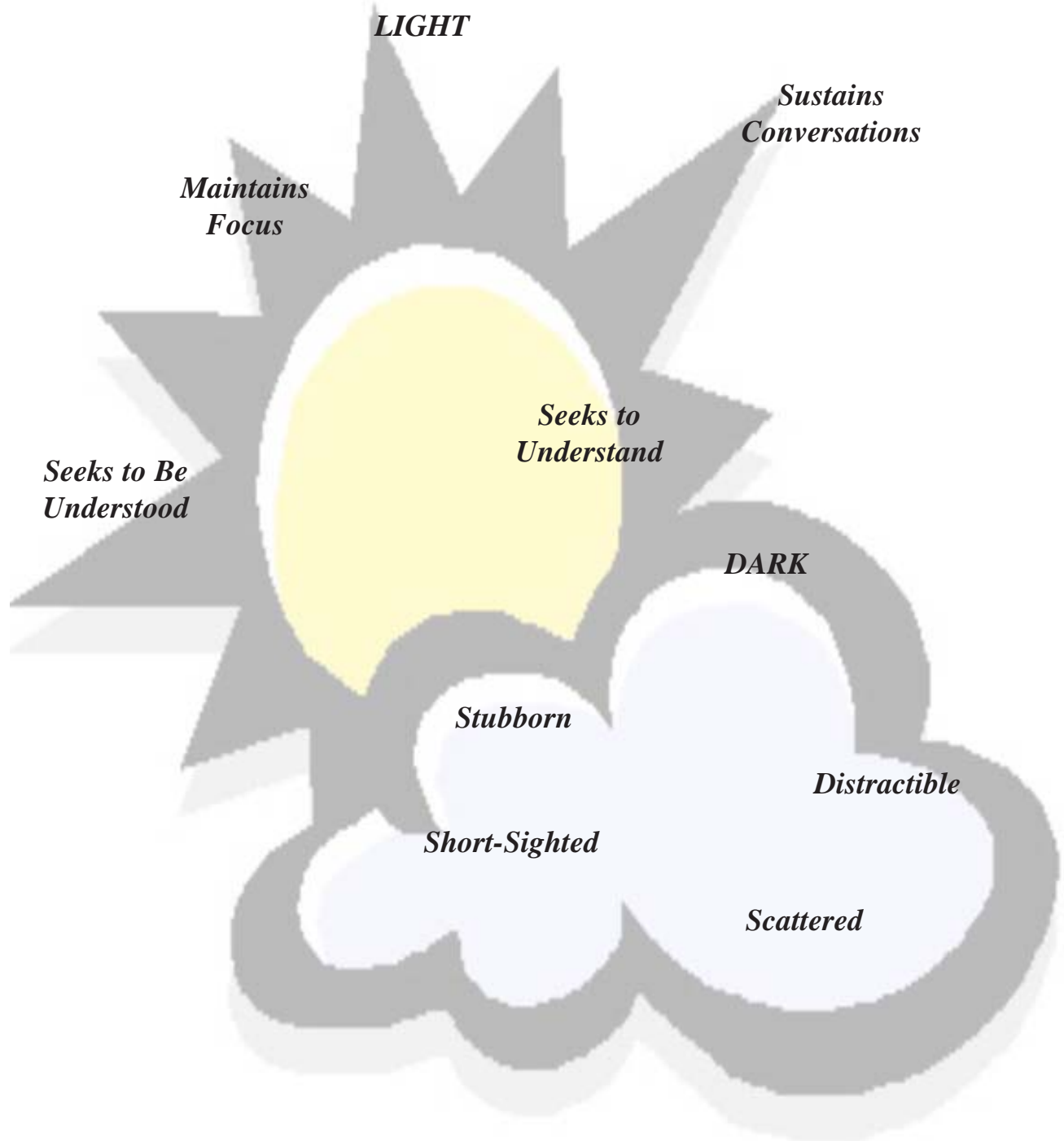
How Can I Be More Thoughtful in My Connections?

       Write, list, or draw your connection strengths in the sun. Under each strength write the situations in which you feel strong. How can you make these feelings more potent at home and at work?
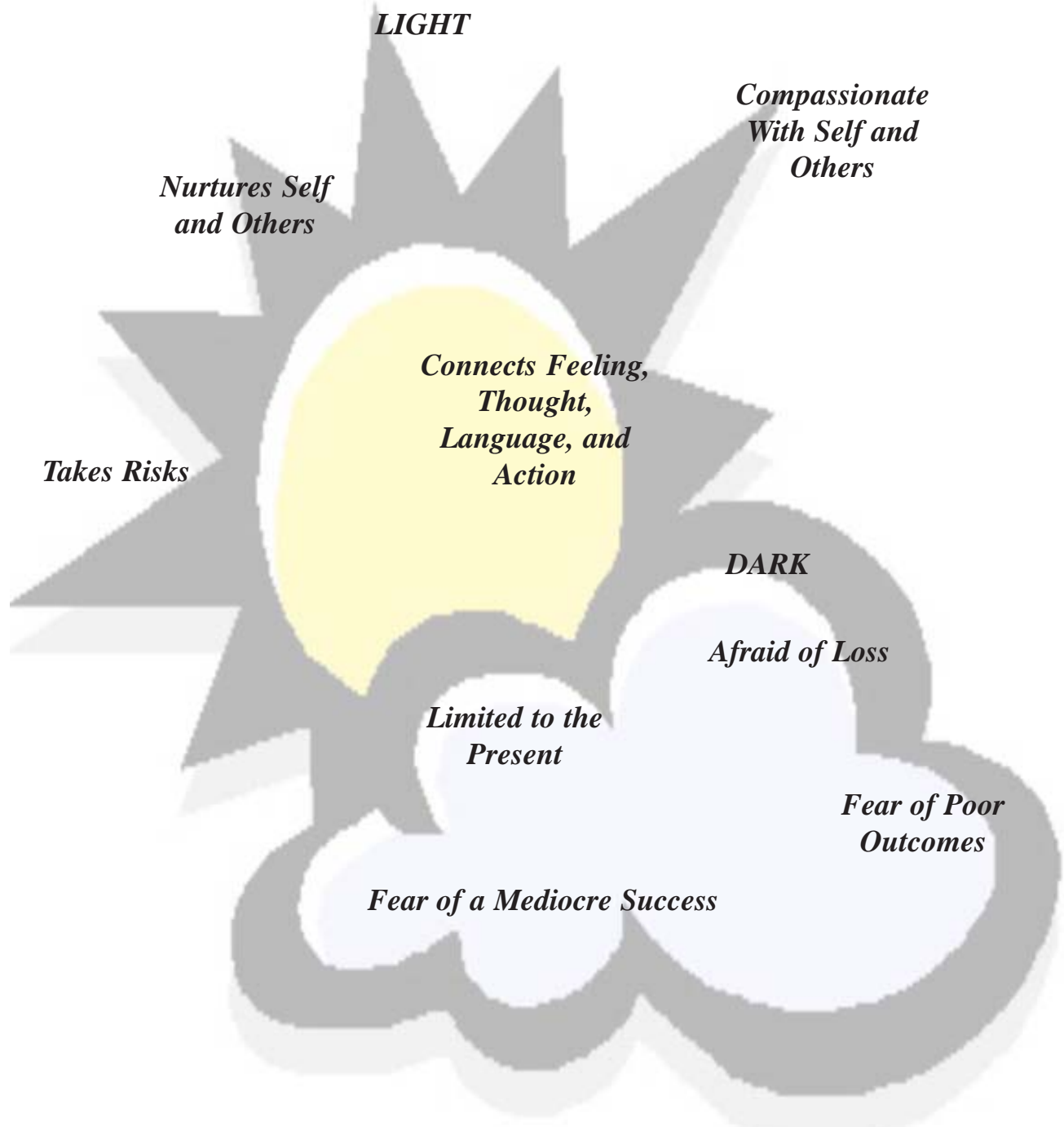
       Now write, list, or draw your connection need areas in the cloud. These areas may be difficult for you. Under each need write the situations in which you feel frail. Now, think about how you honor these feelings and how you can help yourself feel more connected and empowered.

How Do I Reflect With People?

RECEPTIVE

LIGHT

Willing to Live With Short-Term Ambiguity

Willing to Examine Own Assumptions

Willing to Be Assertive

Willing to Share Ideas

Willing to Assimilate and Accommodate New Ideas

DARK

Exclusively Linear

Disapproving

Passive-Aggressive/Aggressive

Self-Important

Judgmental
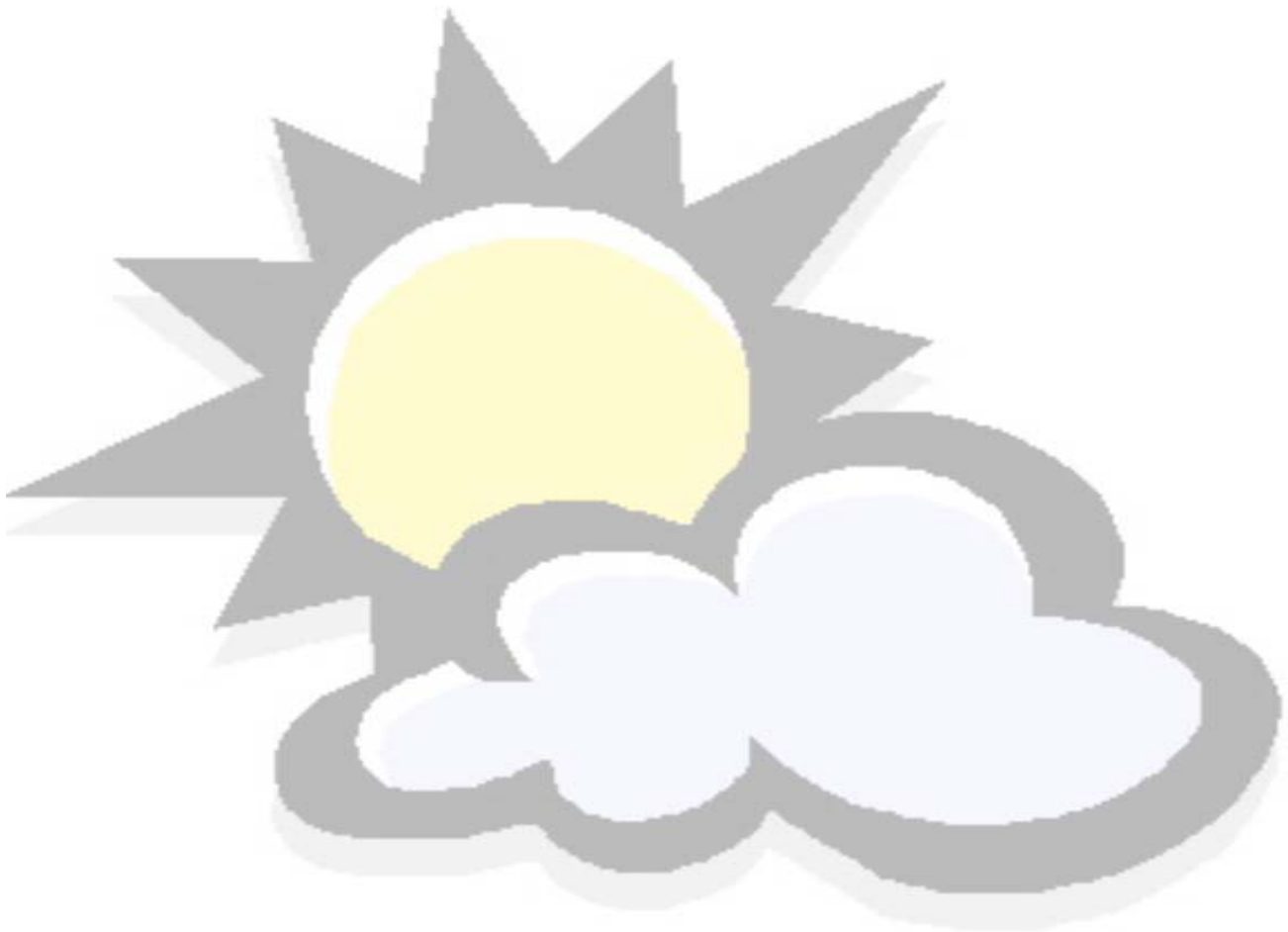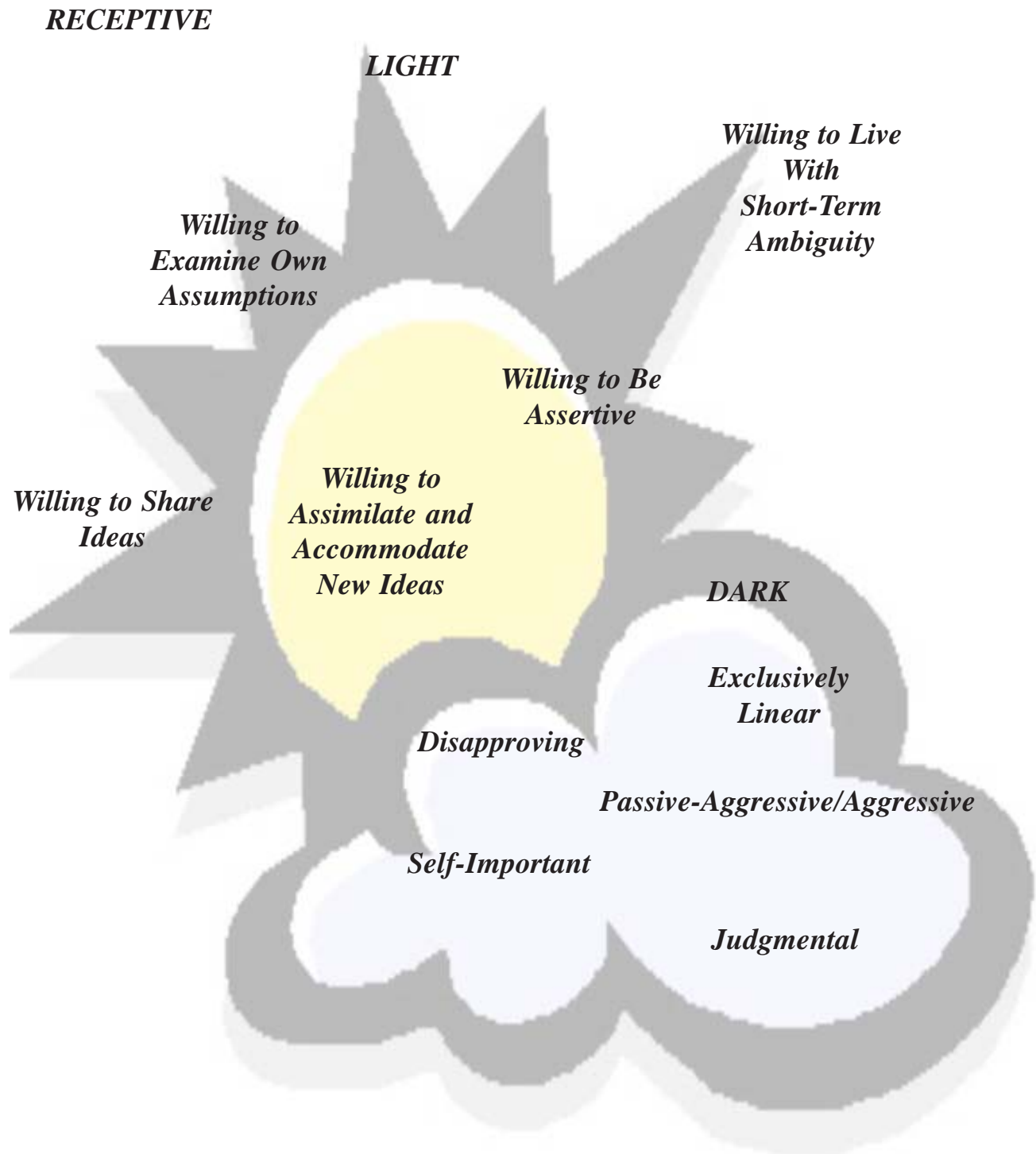
How Can I Be More Thoughtful in My Reflections?

Write, list, or draw your reflective strengths in the sun. Under each strength write the situations in which you feel strong. How can you make these feelings more potent at home and at work?

Now write, list, or draw your reflective need areas in the cloud. These areas may be difficult for you. Under each need write the situations in which you feel frail. Now, think about how you honor these feelings and how you can help yourself feel more connected and empowered.

How Do I Create Actions Because of My Conversations, Connections, and Reflections?

RECEPTIVE

LIGHT

Compassionate With Self and Others

Nurtures Self and Others

Connects Feeling, Thought, Language, and Action

Takes Risks

DARK

Afraid of Loss

Limited to the Present

Fear of Poor Outcomes

Fear of a Mediocre Success

How Can I Be More Thoughtful in My Actions?

Write, list, or draw your action strengths in the sun. Under each strength write the situations in which you feel strong. How can you make these feelings more potent at home and at work?

Now write, list, or draw your action need areas in the cloud. These areas may be difficult for you. Under each need write the situations in which you feel ineffective in your actions. Now, think about how you honor these feelings and how you can help yourself feel more empowered.
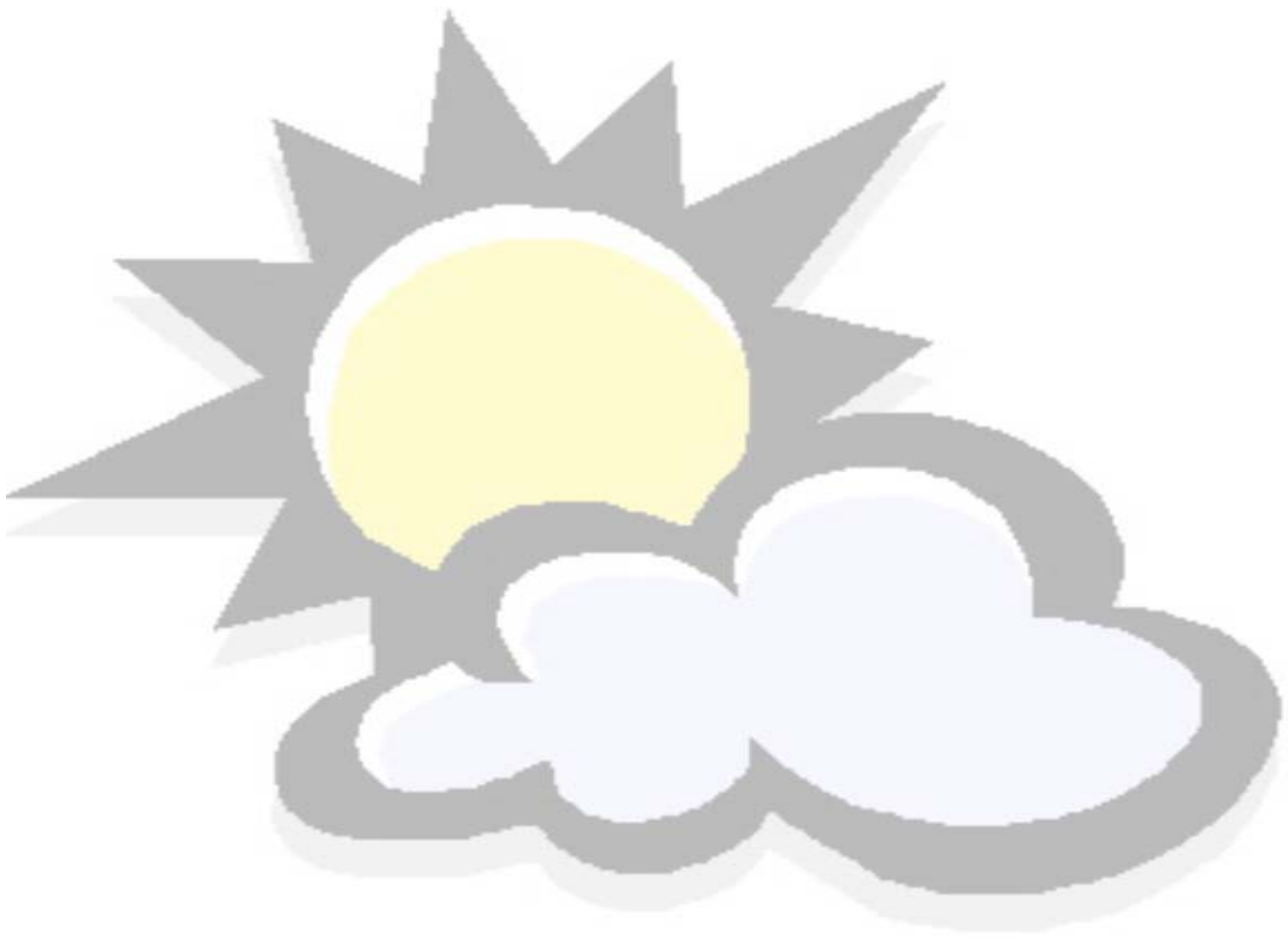
Creating My Personal Plan

How do you prune your thinking and renew your beliefs on a regular basis?
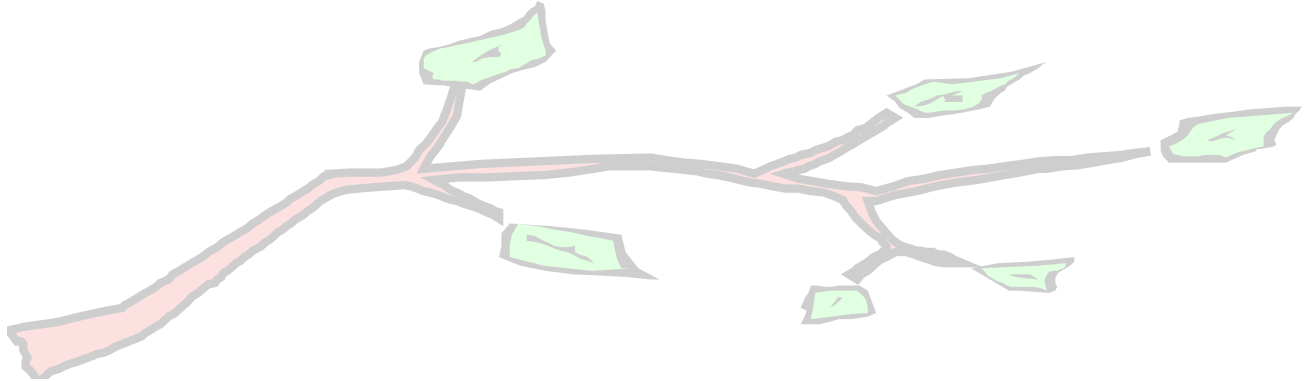
How do you keep your creative nature blossoming, or if it is wilted how do you water and cultivate it?
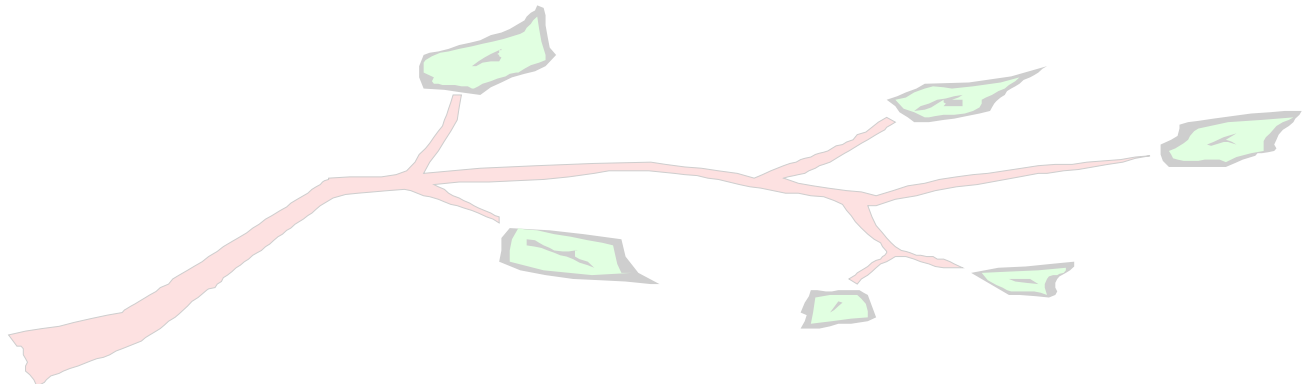
How do you cultivate the relationship between yourself and your life?
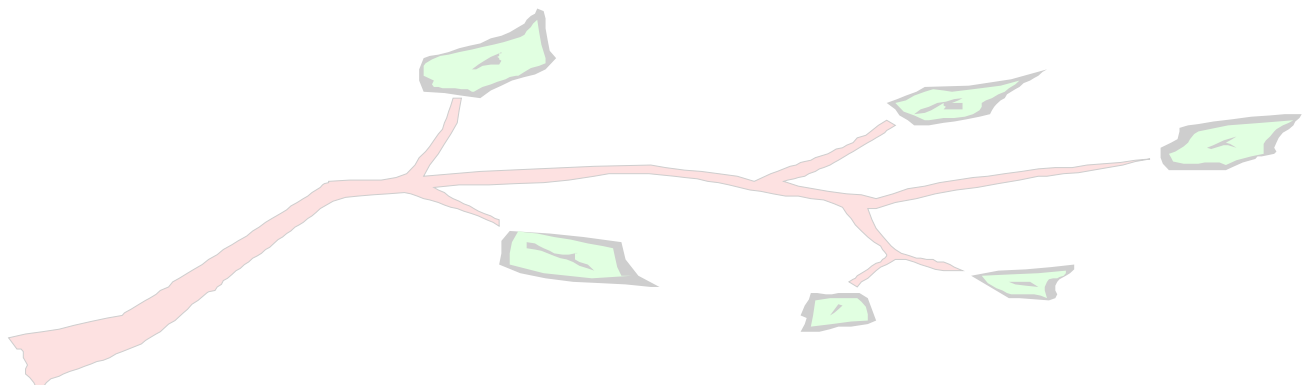
Creating My Personal Plan
(continued)

As you reflect on these questions review your responses in the four dimensions: conversations, connections, reflections, and actions. If thinking about all four dimensions is overwhelming then think about only one or two. What would you like to strengthen and what would you like to change?

Conversation

Connections

Reflections

Actions
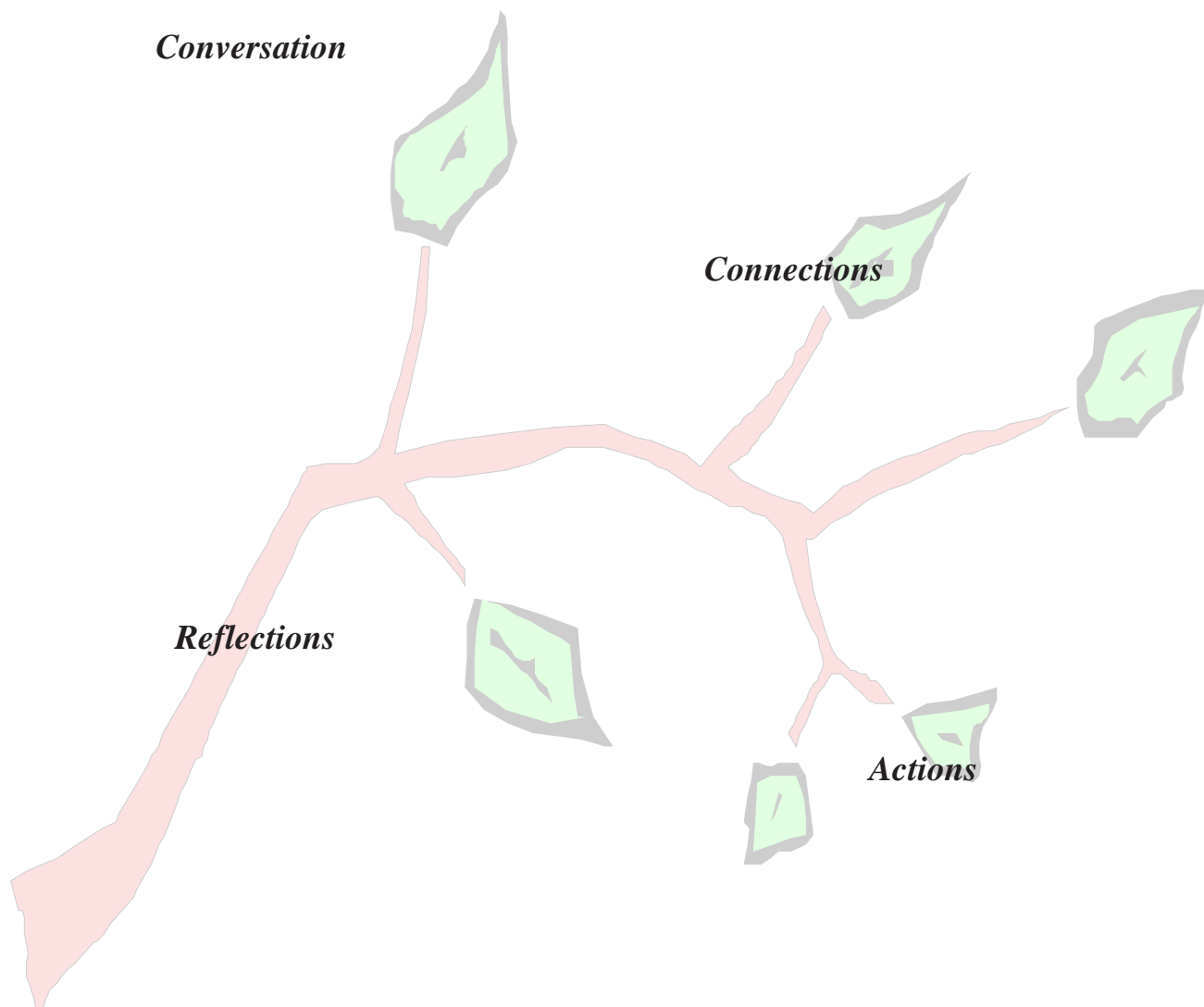
Creating My Personal Plan

(continued)

Imagine a typical workday scenario in your mind. Jot down what is happening on the page.
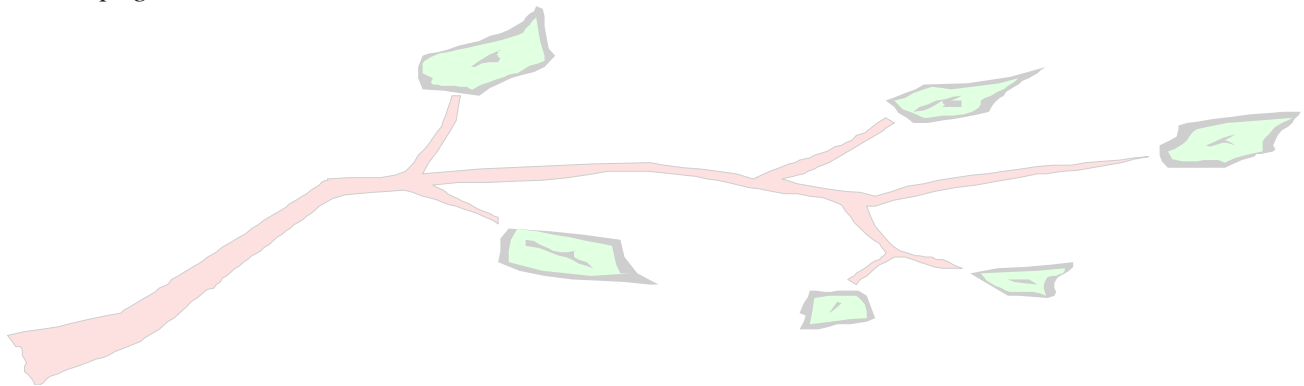
How does the scenario make you feel?
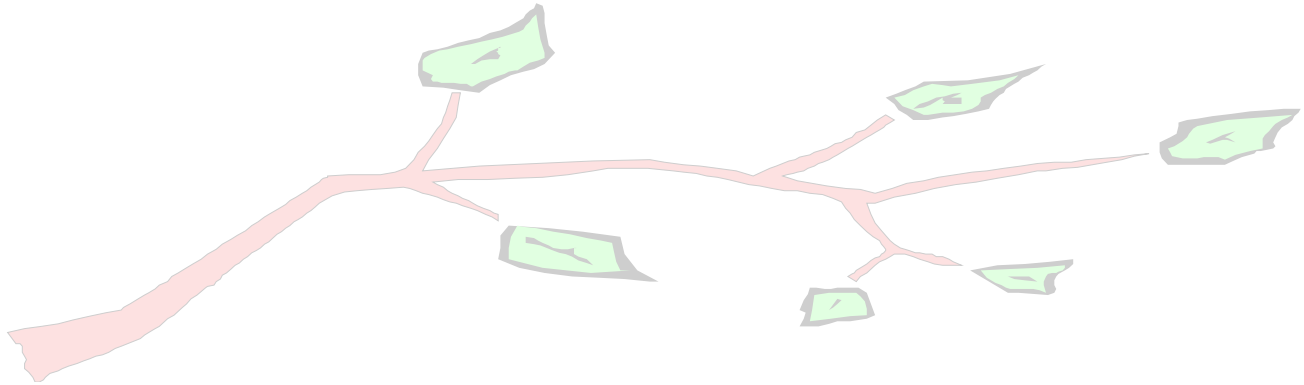
Would you like the feelings you are feeling to be stronger or would you like to change how you are feeling?
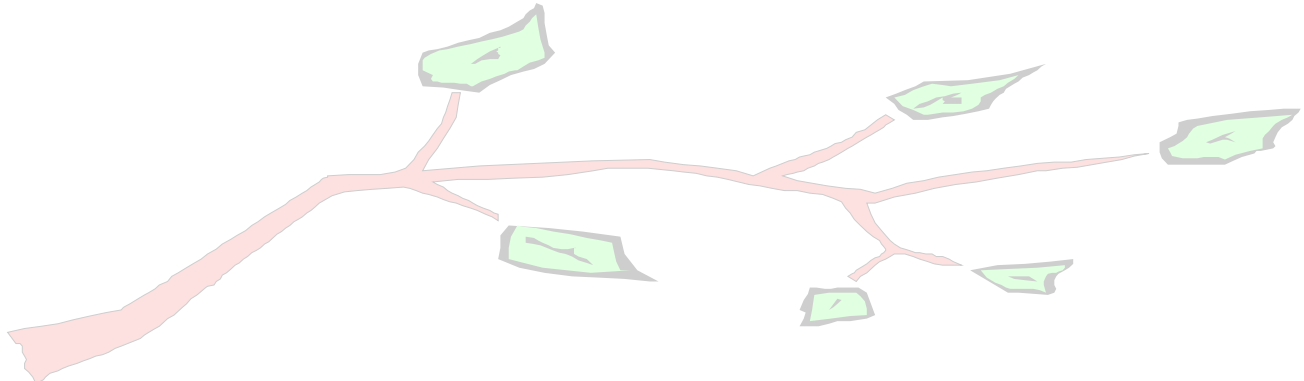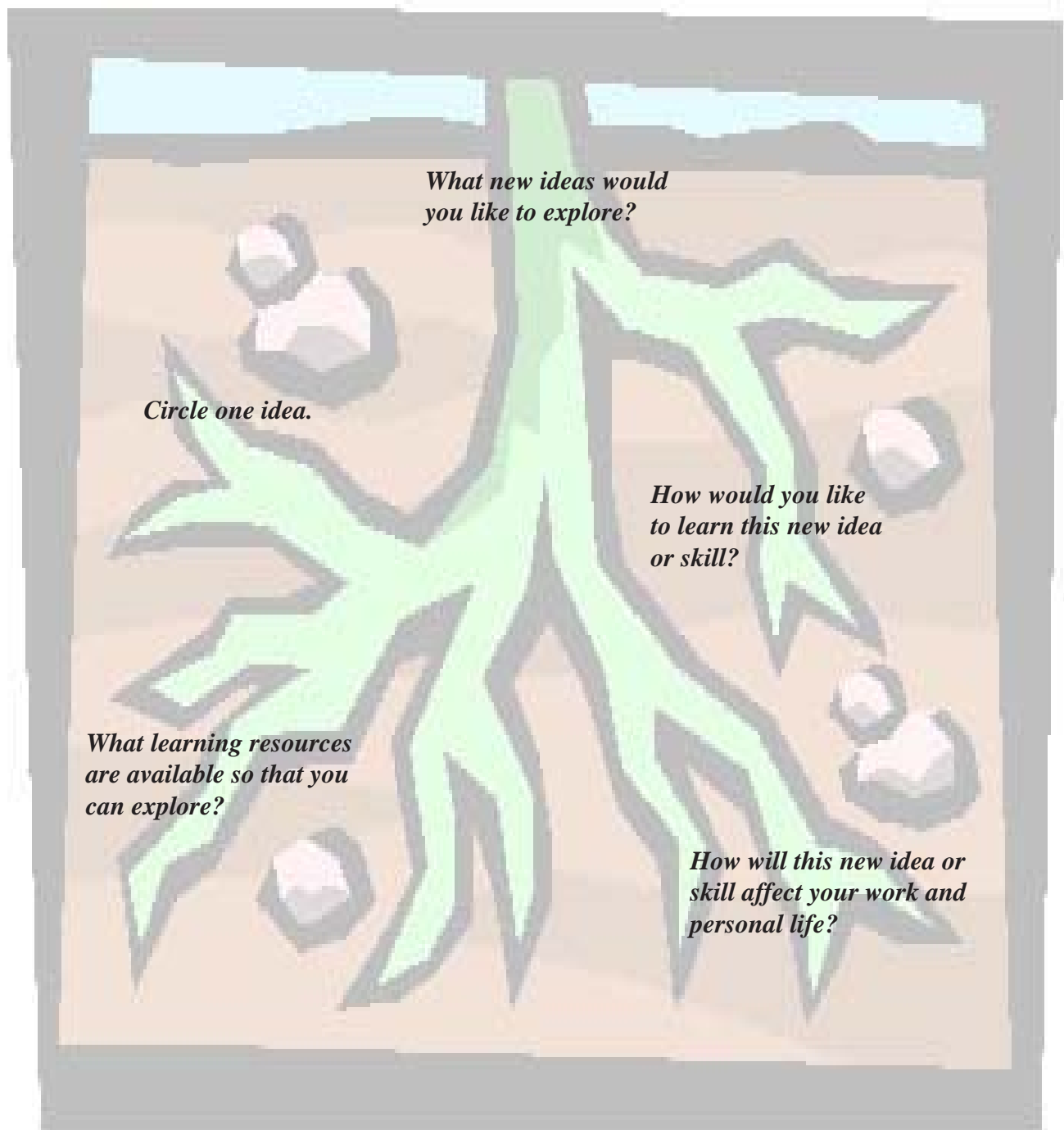
Creating My Personal Plan
(continued)

Now, imagine the scenario again with either stronger feelings or with different feelings. Did you change a conversation, a connection, a reflection, or an action?

Conversation

Connections

Reflections

Actions

How Do You Feel Now?

How Will You Nurture Yourself in the Future?

How Do You Learn and Explore?

What new ideas would you like to explore?

Circle one idea.

How would you like to learn this new idea or skill?

What learning resources are available so that you can explore?

How will this new idea or skill affect your work and personal life?
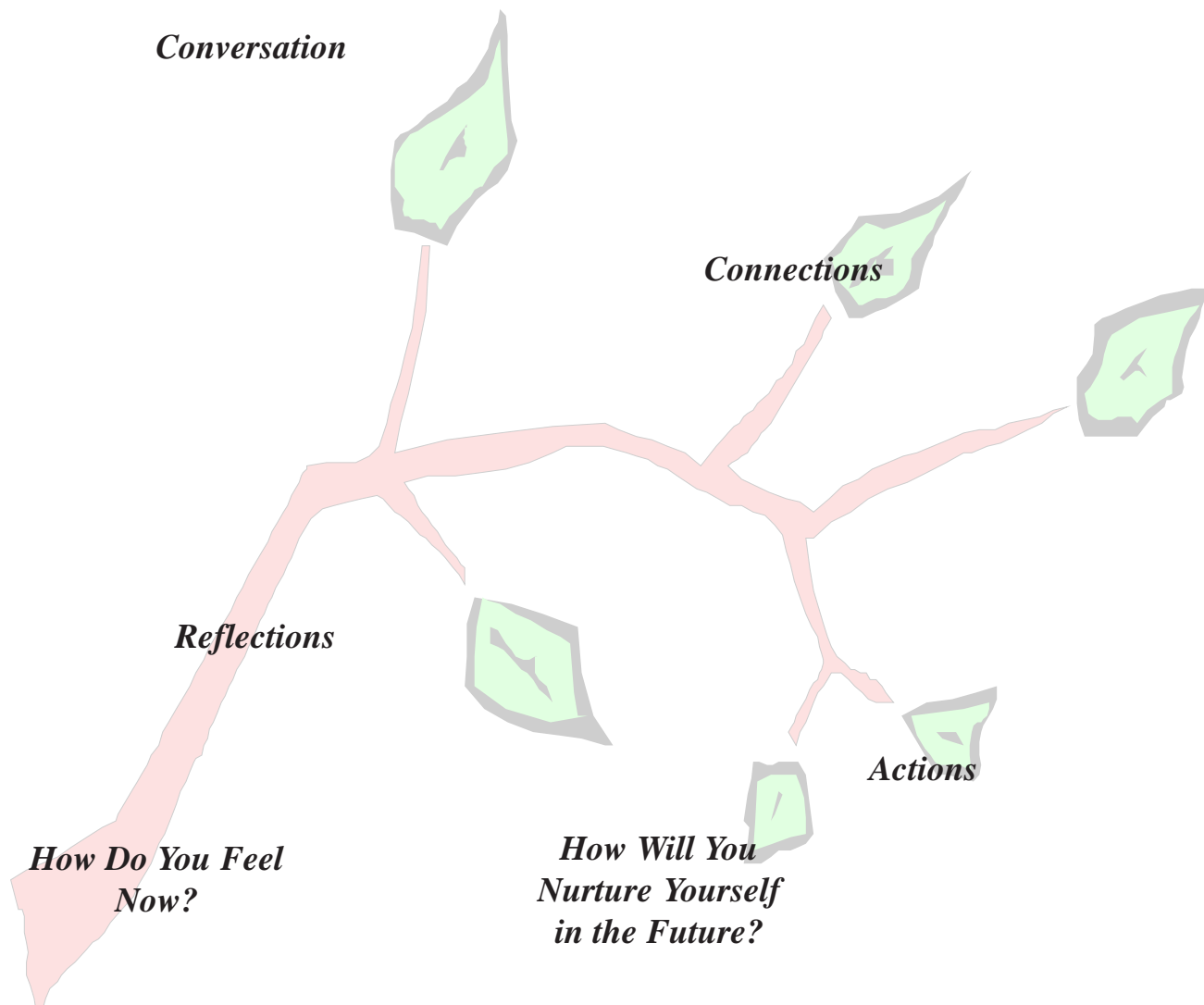
How Do You Assess Your Learning?

What goals did you create for yourself in the self-assessment? What activities are helping you to achieve your goals? How are you doing?

Conversations

My Goal:

Activities to Achieve My Goal:

How I am Doing:

Connections

My Goal:

Activities to Achieve My Goal:

How I am Doing:

Reflections

My Goal:

Activities to Achieve My Goal:

How I am Doing:

Actions

My Goal:

Activities to Achieve My Goal:

How I am Doing:

How Do You Apply Self-Assessment Toward Self-Discovery?

Learning about ourselves and acquiring new skills for our jobs can be a very enjoyable process, but sometimes we make it difficult. Every day you need to stop and listen to your intuition and what it is telling you. When do you feel good during the day? How can you make this feeling occur during other parts of the day? When do you feel like, "I can't" or "I don't know how to do that." Let's focus on what we can do to nurture ourselves as we grow – every day. Think of one idea that you learned during the class that you would like to take time for every day. When you want to learn something new, because you want to grow and feel more comfortable in your job, how will you use this new idea? Who can support you? What resources are available? Jot down or draw some ideas.

My Job Skills

       Think about all the skills that you need to perform well at your job. (Yes, I know that we don't have all day). Make one list of the skills that you feel confident about (sun), and create another list of the skills that are required that you don't feel confident about (cloud).

I am confident about these skills:
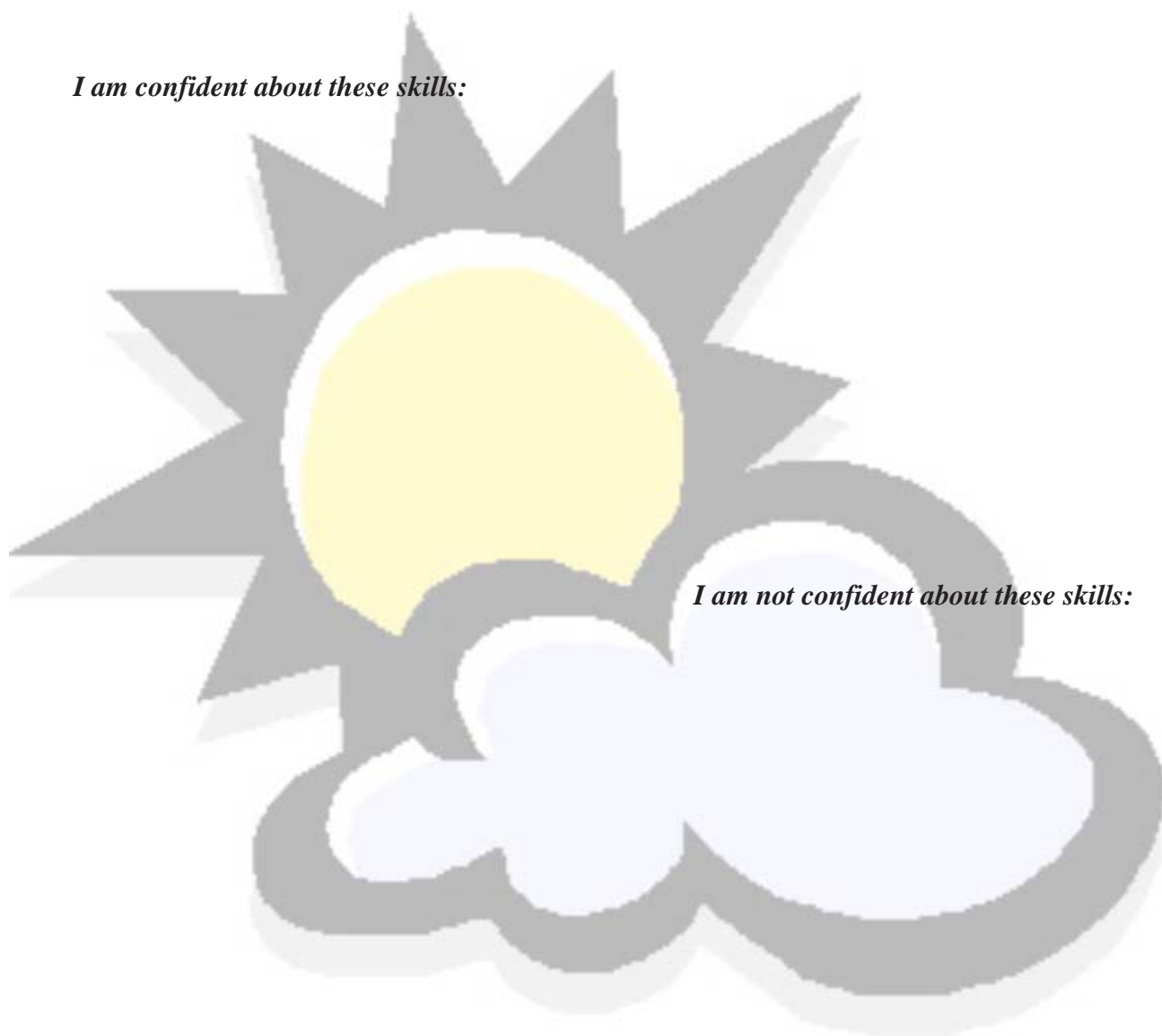
I am not confident about these skills:

My Job Skills
(continued)

Prioritize the skills that are uncomfortable, but you need for your position. Next to each skill write what resources you need to learn the skill. How will you get the resources you need?

Needed
Resources:

Skills:

Plan:

My New Job Skills

Think into the near future. Once you have acquired one or two of these skills how will they affect your conversations, connections, reflections, and actions? Overall, how will you feel about yourself?

Conversation

Connections

Reflections

Actions
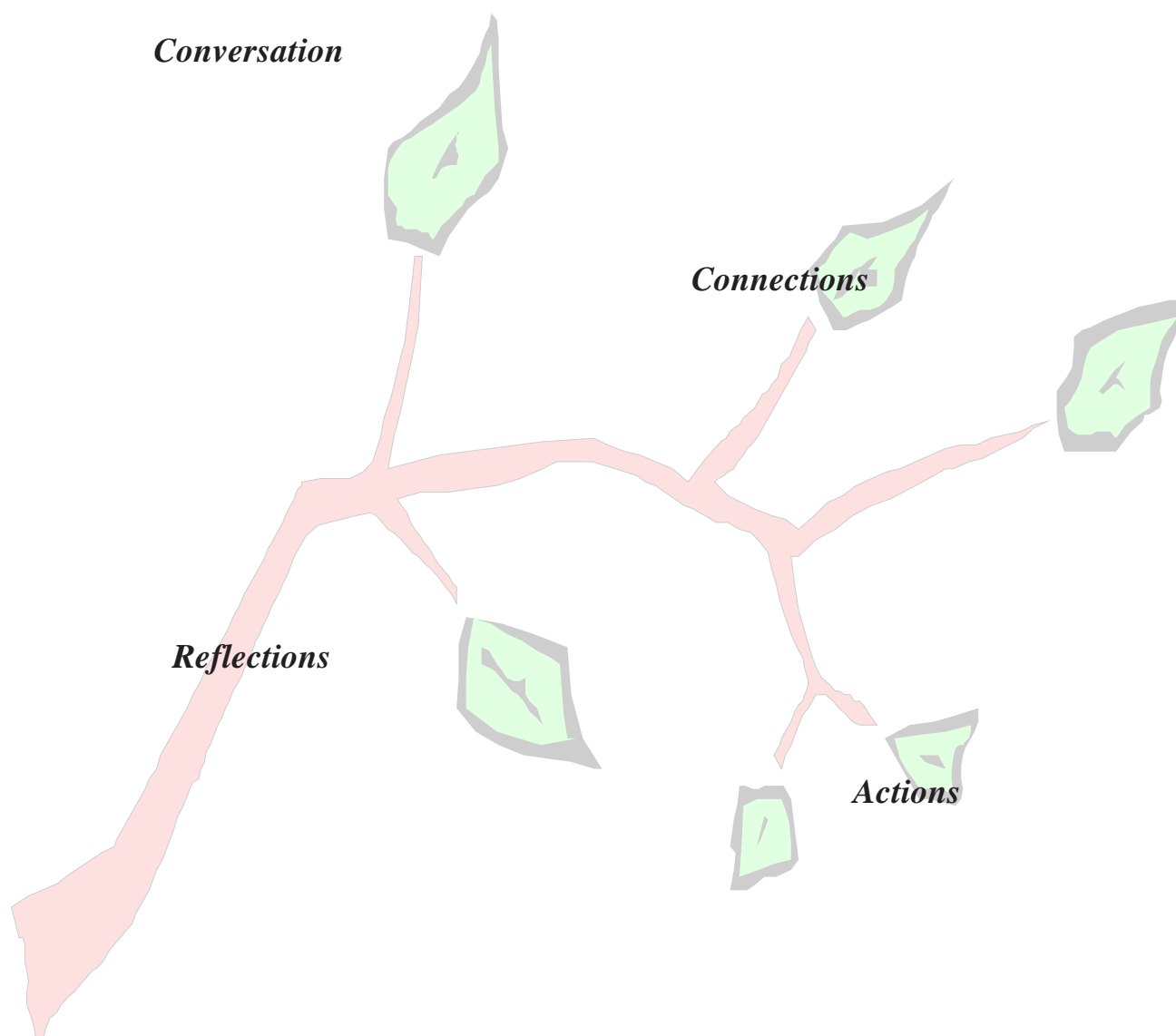
How I Prefer to Be Supervised

We all need mentors to help us grow in our work. You probably work with many teachers, however one is your designated supervisor. Part of her job is to help you grow in your position as a paraeducator. Think about how you have conversations, connections, reflections, and take action with this person's guidance.

Conversations

Connections

Reflections

Actions
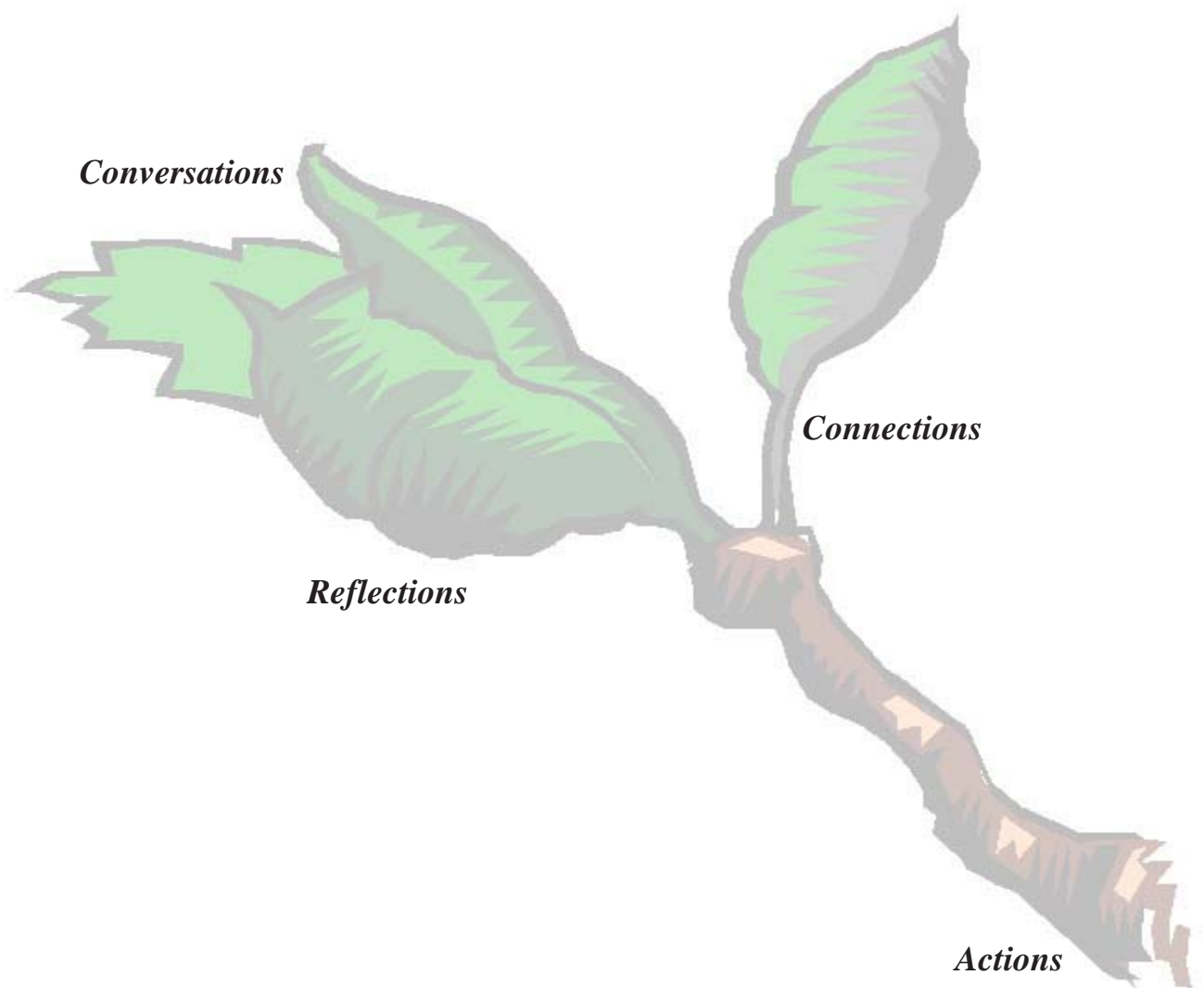
Ways of Supervising

Think about how you prefer to be supervised. Do you like to engage in conversations? Maybe you prefer to have a checklist in front of you to work from. Let's reflect on the various ways we get feedback from our supervisors.

Checklists*: Checklists contain items from your job description and from identified areas in your previous evaluations. A checklist may be helpful because you can prioritize the skills you would like to improve. How do you envision using a checklist to have a conversation about your personal growth?*

Conversations*: Conversations with your supervising teacher allow you to gather specific information about your growth process. They may include weekly planning meetings, daily or scheduled conversations, or more formal evaluations. How do you envision engaging in conversation about your personal growth?*

Ways of Supervising
(continued)

Daily Log: *A daily log is a place where you can record anecdotal comments, activities with short evaluations, insights, and creative ideas. How do you envision writing in a daily log and sharing your ideas with your supervisor?*

Observing: *Observe your supervising teacher. Keep a small notebook and record your thoughts and reactions. How do you envision observing your supervising teacher and sharing your ideas with her?*
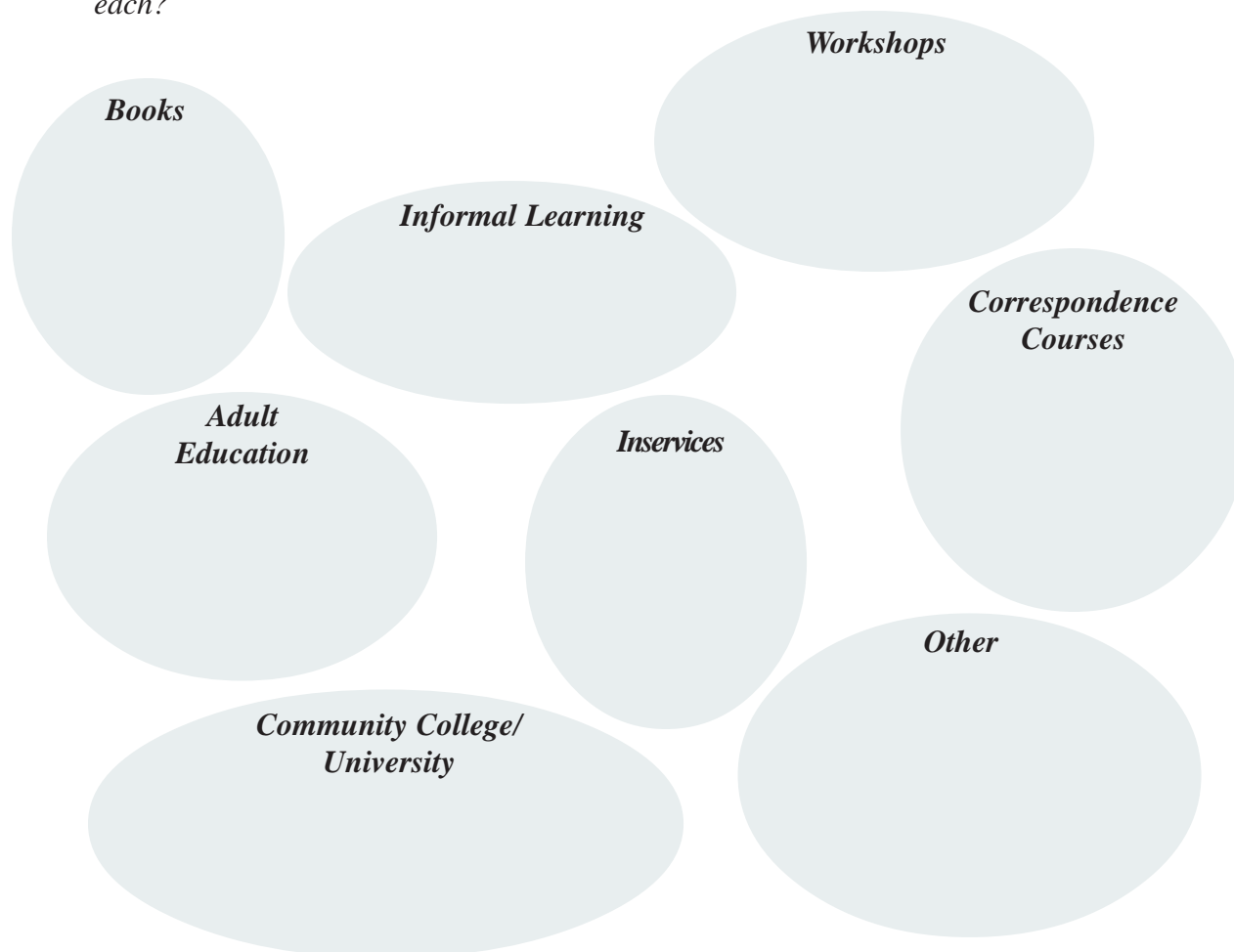
How I Prefer to Learn

How do you prefer to learn a new skill?

What personal growth opportunities engage you? What are the pros and cons of each?

Workshops

Books

Informal Learning

Correspondence Courses

Adult Education

Inservices

Other

Community College/ University

A Life-Long Learning Plan

Draw a picture of yourself now.

A Life-Long Learning Plan
(continued)

Draw a picture of yourself in the future (about two years). Where will you be? What will you be doing? How have you grown?

A Life-Long Learning Plan
(continued)

Draw a map of how you will get to the place that you want to be in two years. How will you know when you are there?

Purposes for Feedback

Reflect on the different reasons why feedback can be helpful as we continuously learn in our jobs. Below are some reasons why beneficial feedback is helpful. Jot down your personal experiences under each characteristic.

Needs Driven

Promote Growth

Reflections

Connections

Action Based

Skill Oriented

Legalities
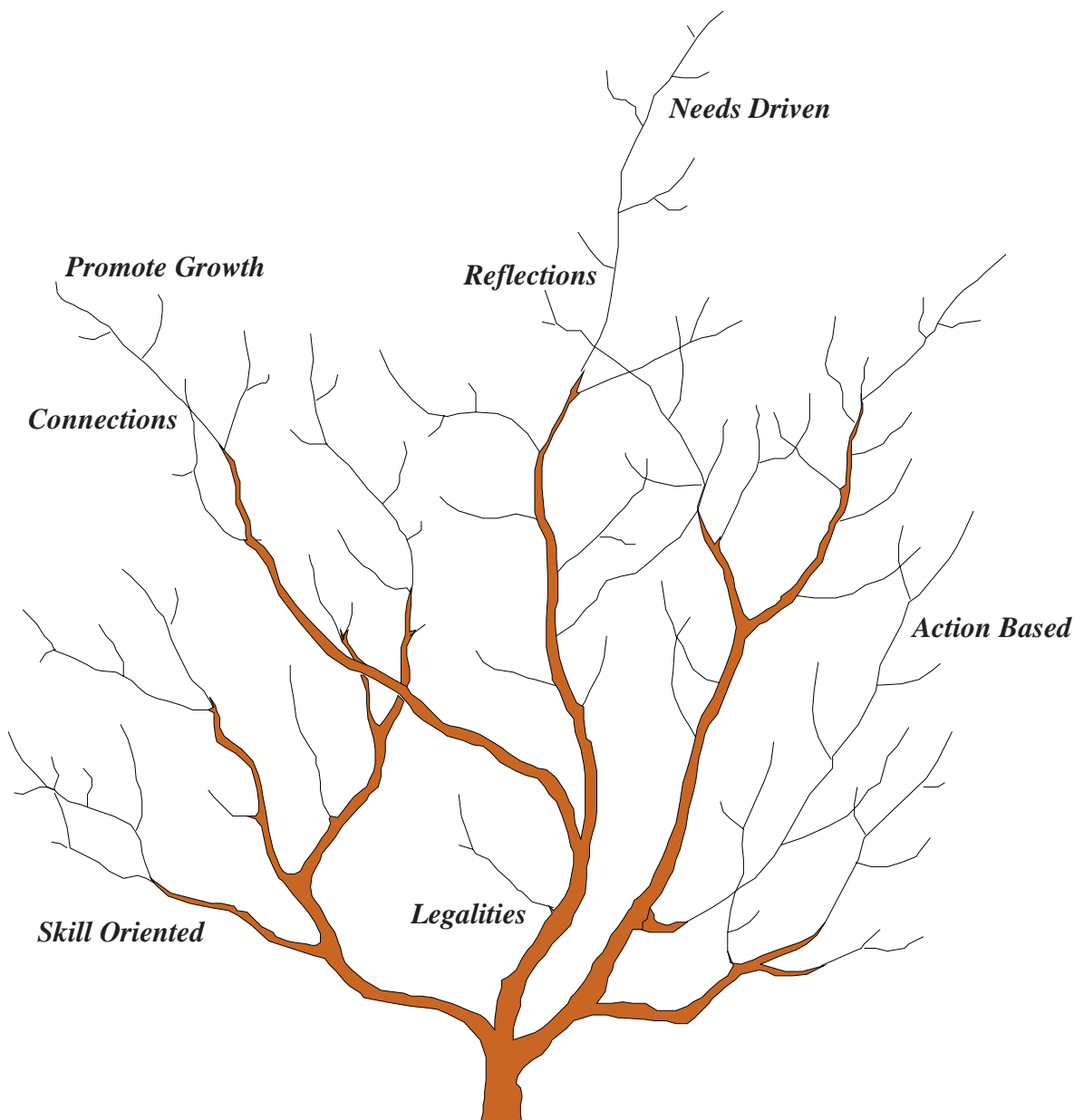
Systemic Feedback

Feedback usually happens frequently and informally during the week. How do you get feedback in your job? Below are some ideas. Write your experiences under each characteristic.

Write quick notes on stickies.

Schedule fast feedback times.

Videotape each other.

Put comments in each other's mailbox.

Conversation after an observation.
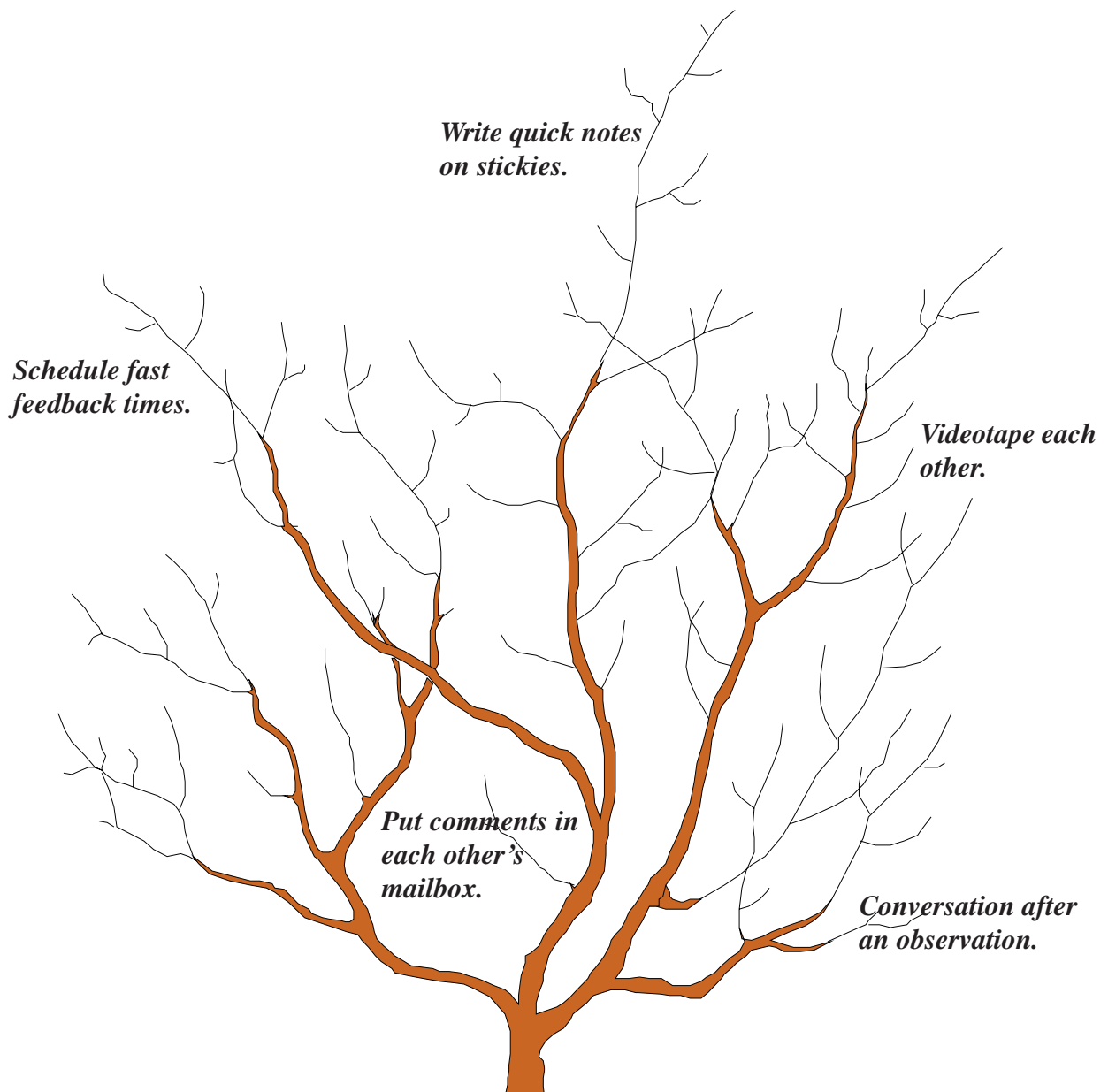
Feedback Sessions

Short but frequent feedback sessions about teaching between you and your supervising teacher are essential to create a strong team. Feedback sessions keep the team connected in their reflections and in their planned actions with students. Beneficial feedback sessions support the team to remain more open to growth and change. These regular sessions do not replace formal evaluation procedures. Formal evaluation must be done as a separate function, adhering to school district policies and procedures.

Describe what a valuable feedback session would look like for you. How would you participate? How would you feel? What type of connection would you feel with the teacher? How would you engage in reflection? What type of action plan would you create?
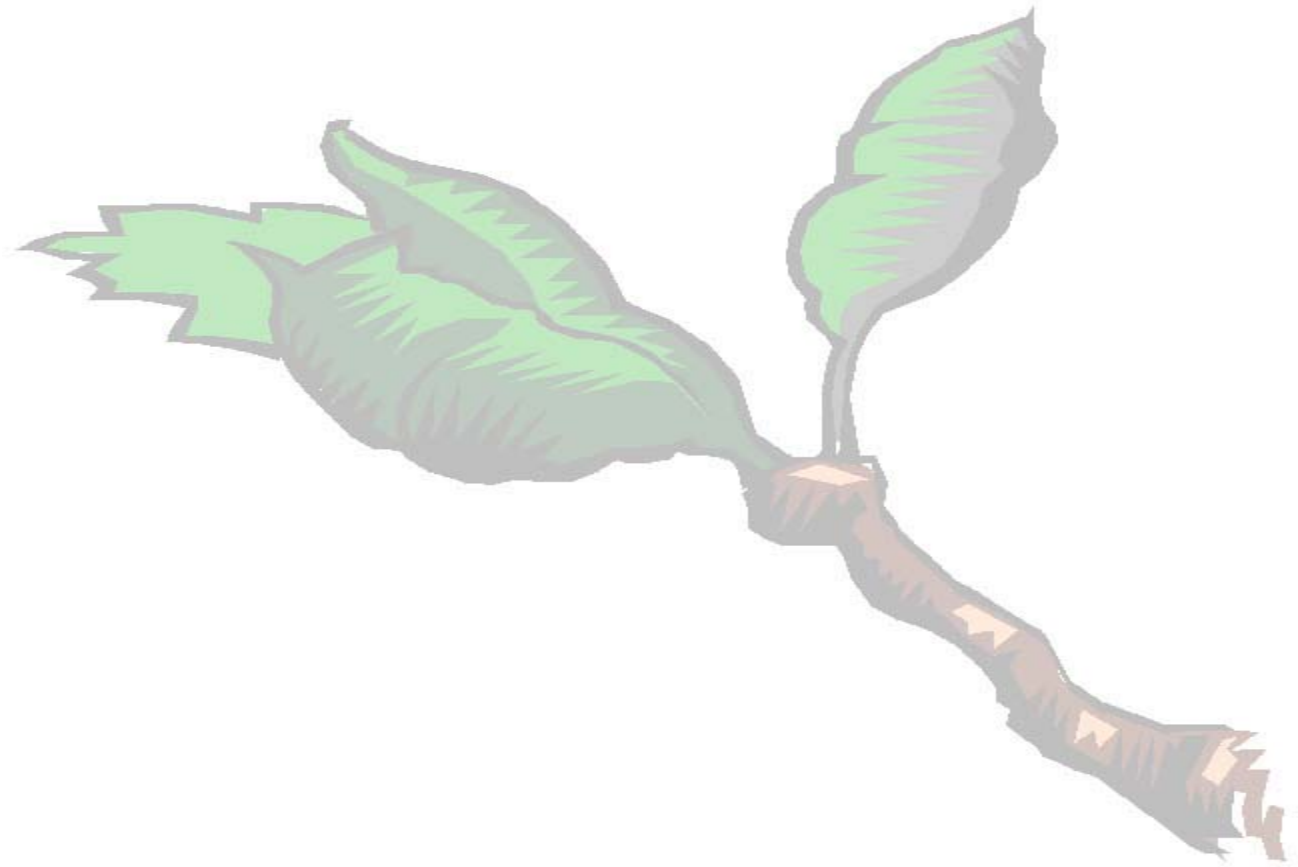
My Job Description

Write your job description and reflect on the duties you perform and the types of feedback each requires.

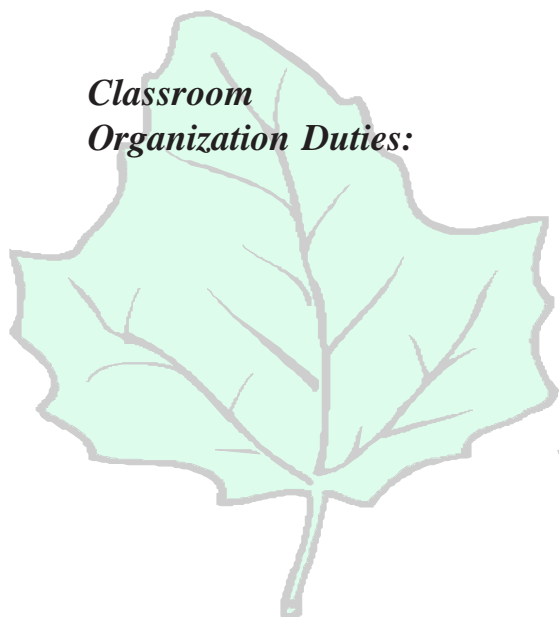### Instructional Duties:
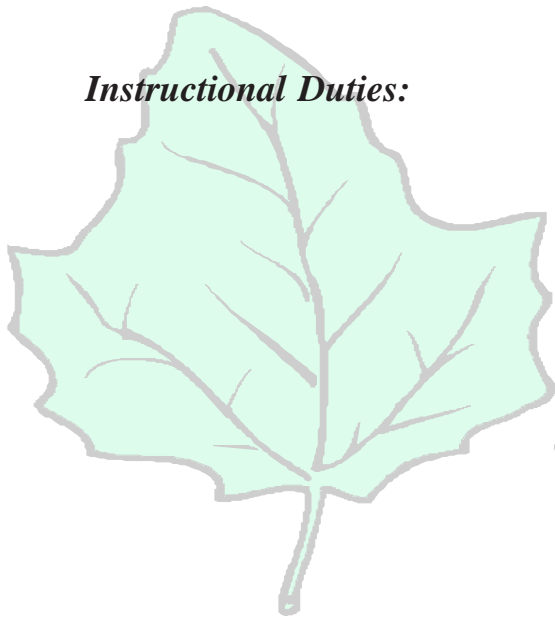
Feedback Needed:
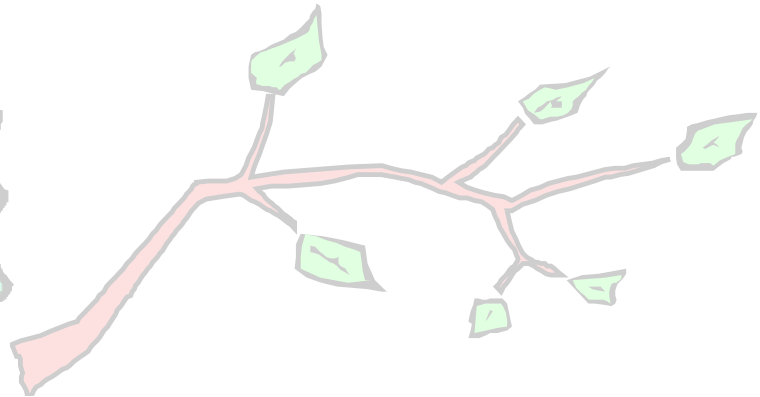
Resource Duties:
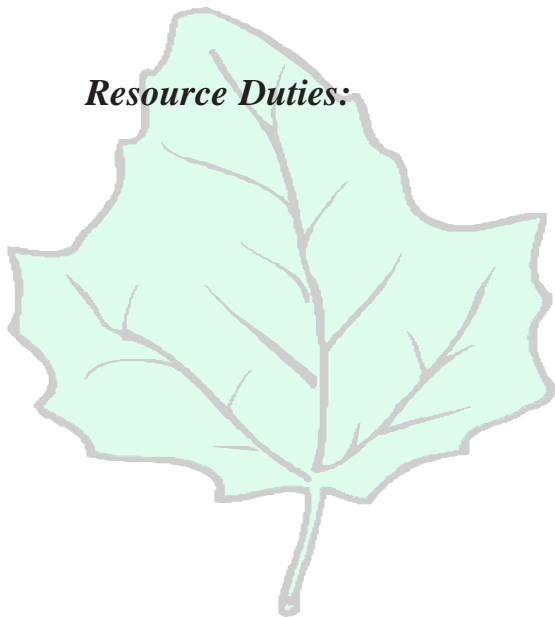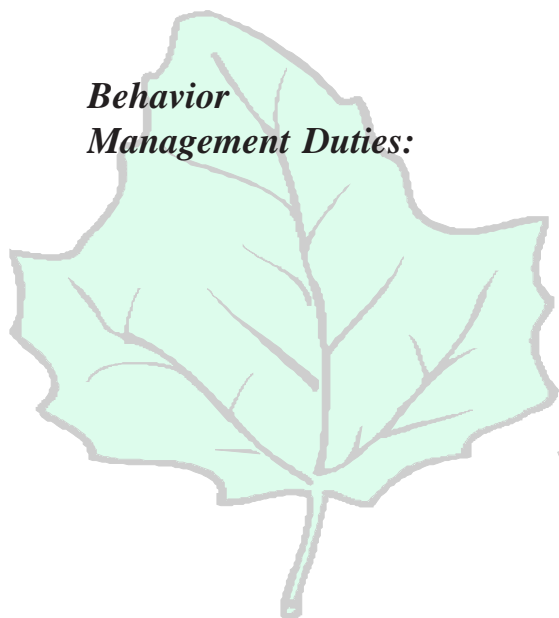
Feedback Needed:
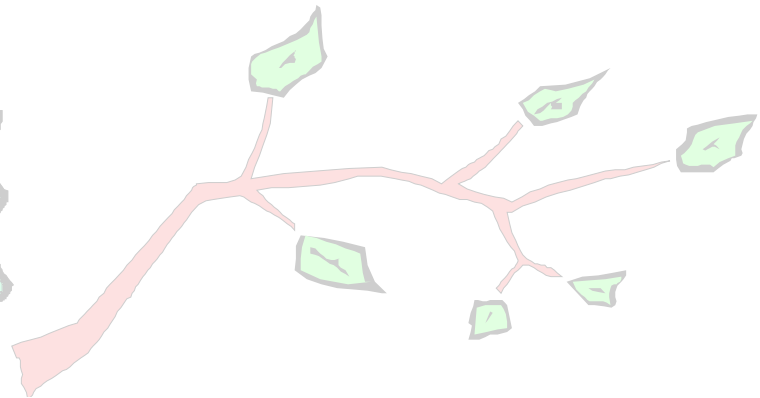
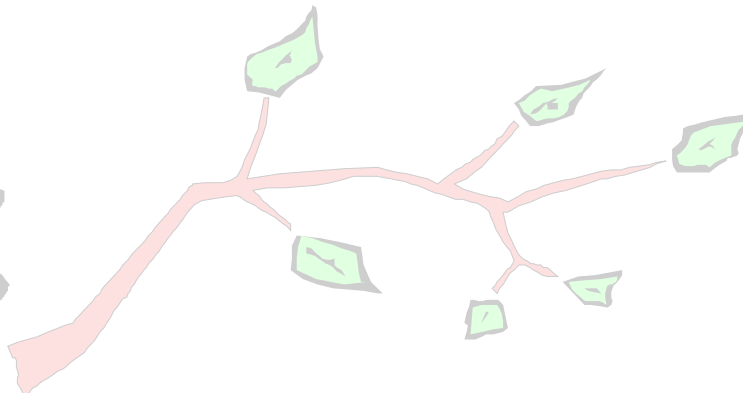# My Job Description
(continued)

**Classroom
Organization Duties:**

Feedback Needed:
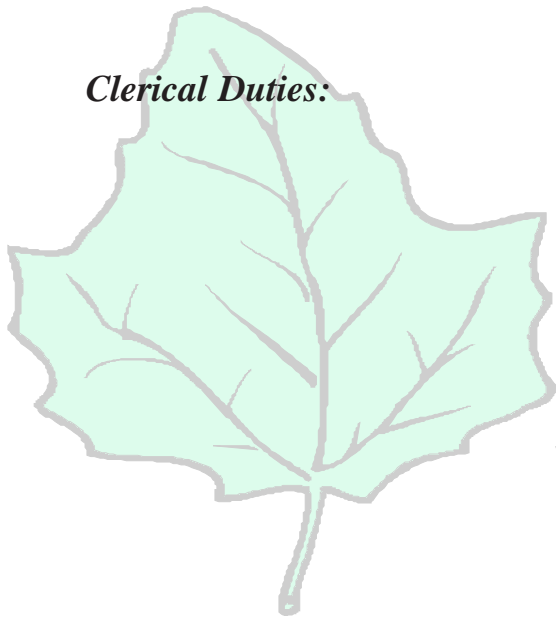
**Behavior
Management Duties:**

Feedback Needed:
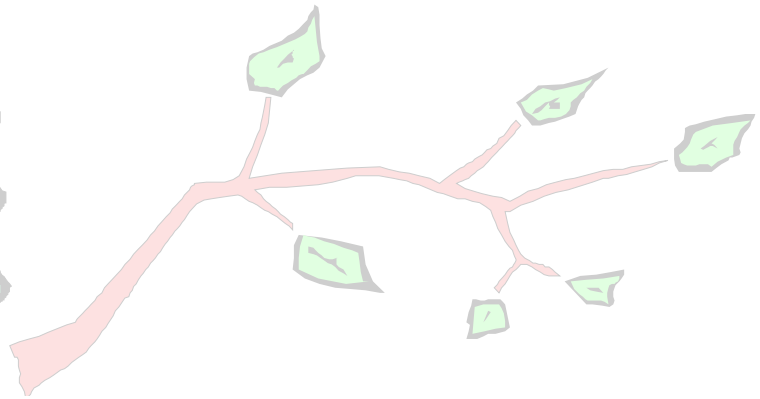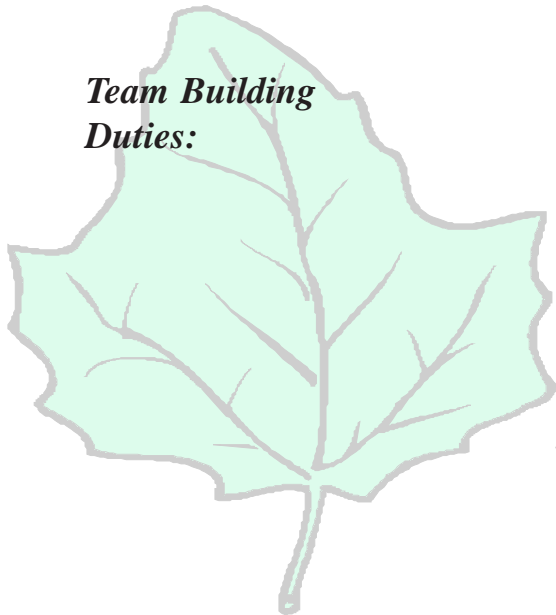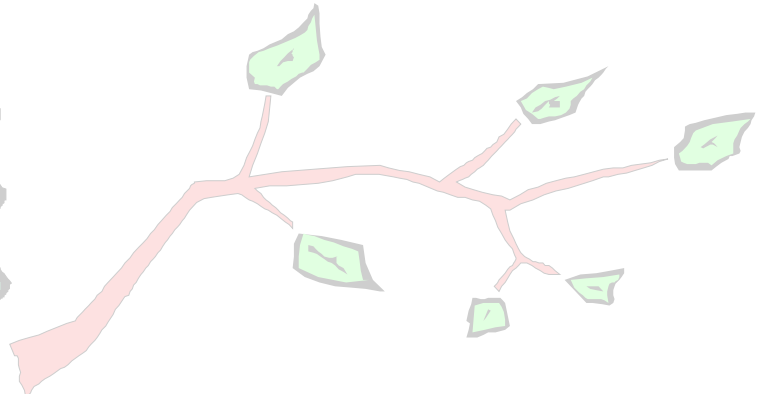
My Job Description
(continued)

Clerical Duties:
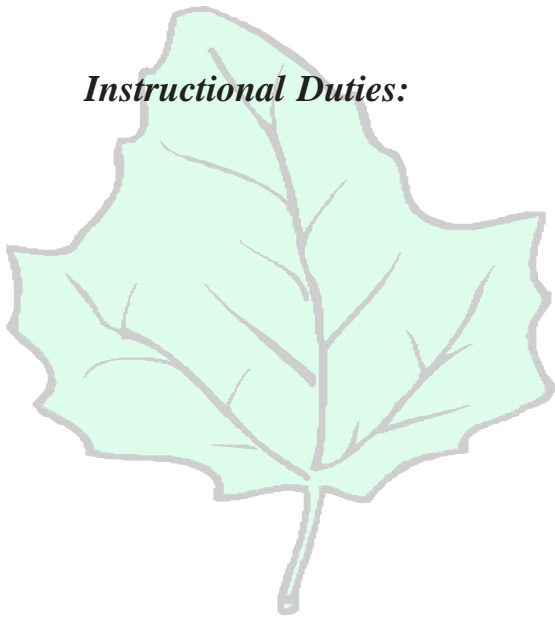
Feedback Needed:

Team Building Duties:

Feedback Needed:

How Am I Doing?

Reflect on your performance of each of the duties you listed in your job description. Develop a rubric for self-evaluation and apply it to your job description.
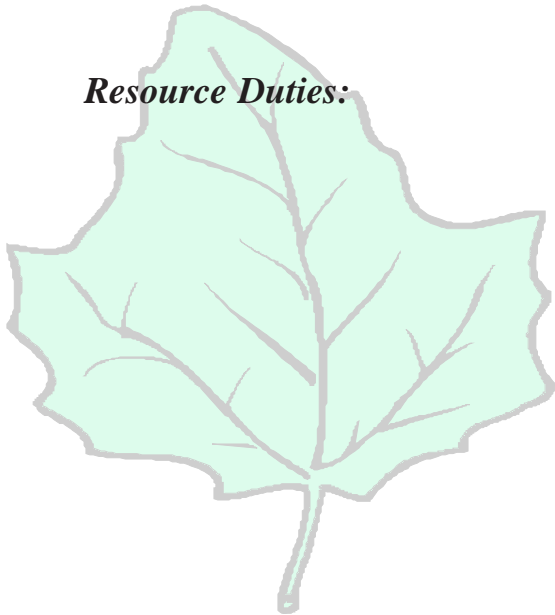
Instructional Duties:
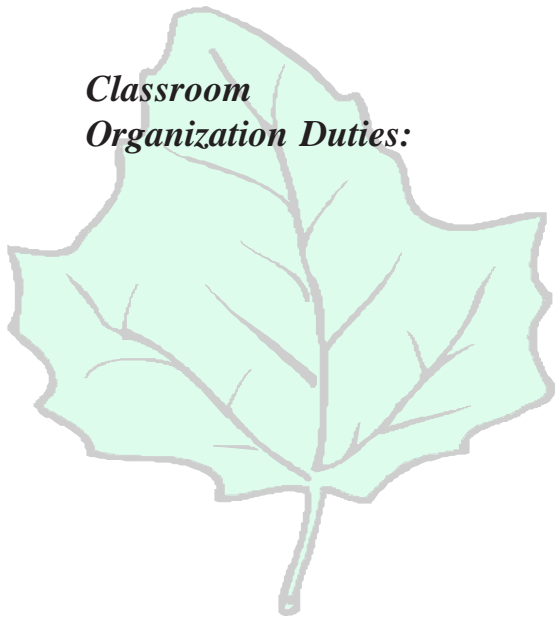
Self-Evaluation:

Resource Duties:

Self-Evaluation:

How Am I Doing?
(continued)

Classroom Organization Duties:

Self-Evaluation:

Behavior Management Duties:

Self-Evaluation:

How Am I Doing?
(continued)

Clerical Duties:
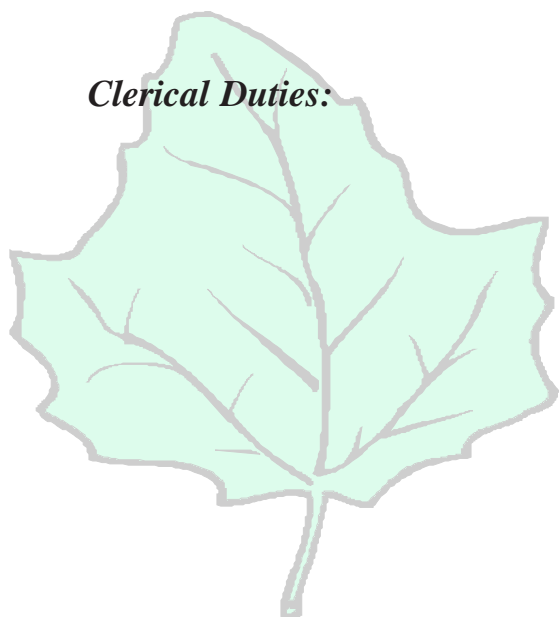
Self-Evaluation:

Team Building Duties:
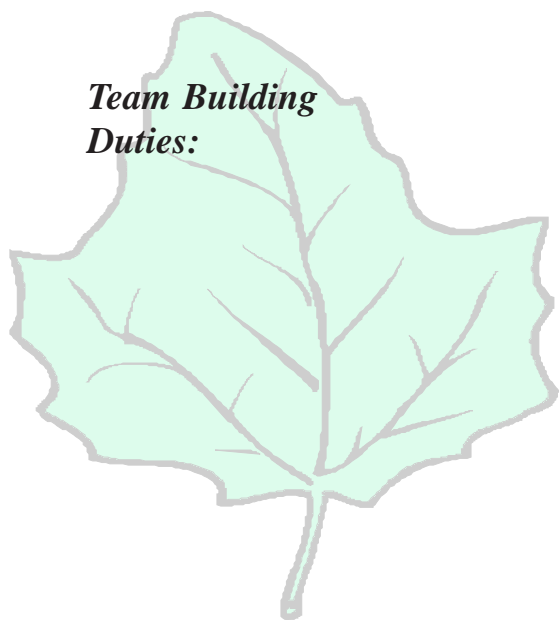
Self-Evaluation:

Valuable Student Feedback

Think about one learner with whom you work. Jot down a description of the person and the type of relationship you have developed together.

Now, reflect on how you believe this learner views you as a paraeducator. How would this person describe you? How would you use this feedback to improve your learning?

Constructive Feedback

Describe a situation when you received constructive feedback from another adult.

How did you both engage each other?

How were you both feeling?

How did you react?

What follow-up actions occurred?

How do you give feedback to students?
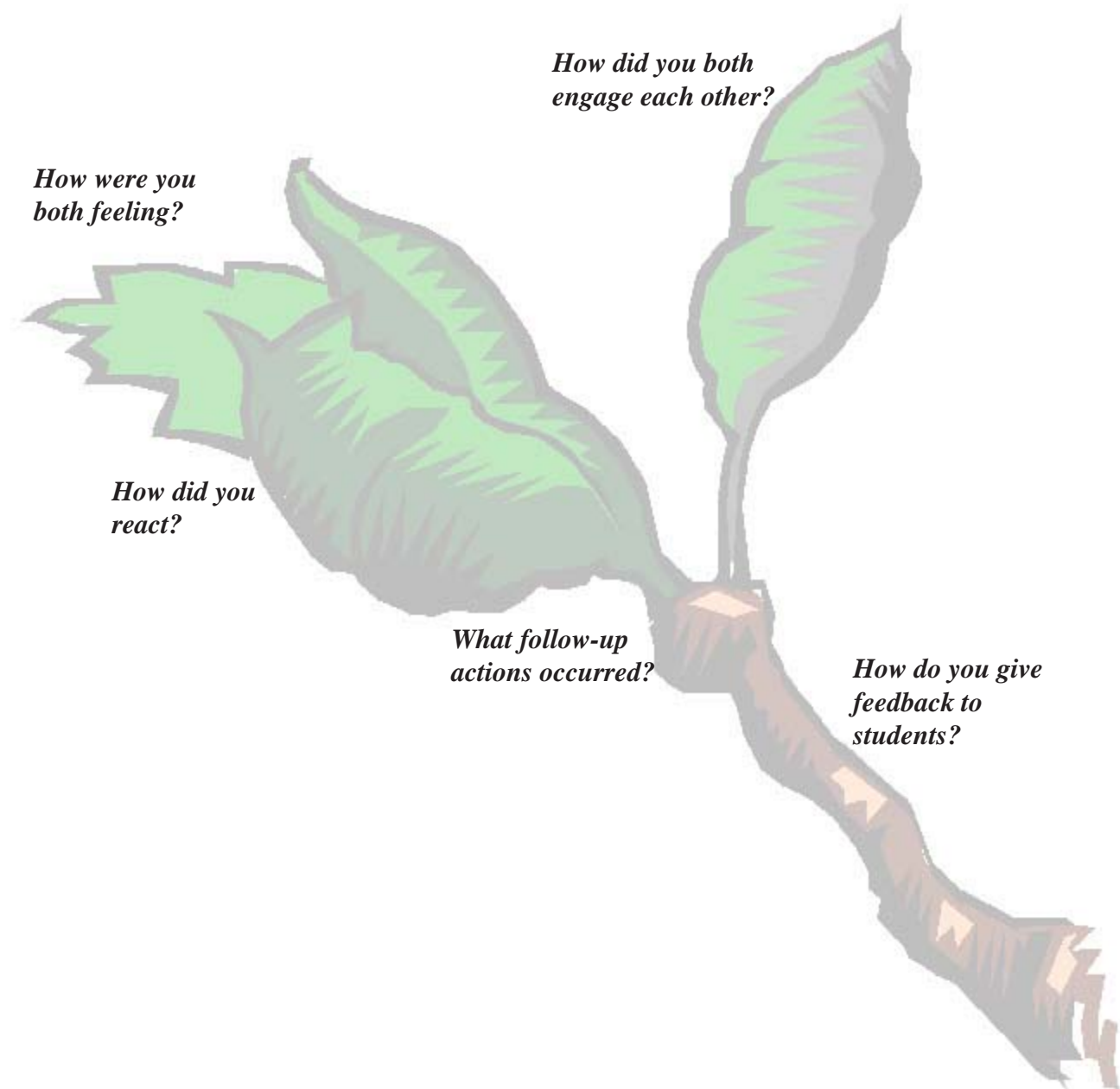
Active Listening

Describe how you engage when you are receiving feedback. Under each strategy jot down how you have used it to make the feedback beneficial.

State how you and the other person are feeling.

State the negative in a positive way.

Ask for clarification.

Give eye contact.

Summarize the main ideas.
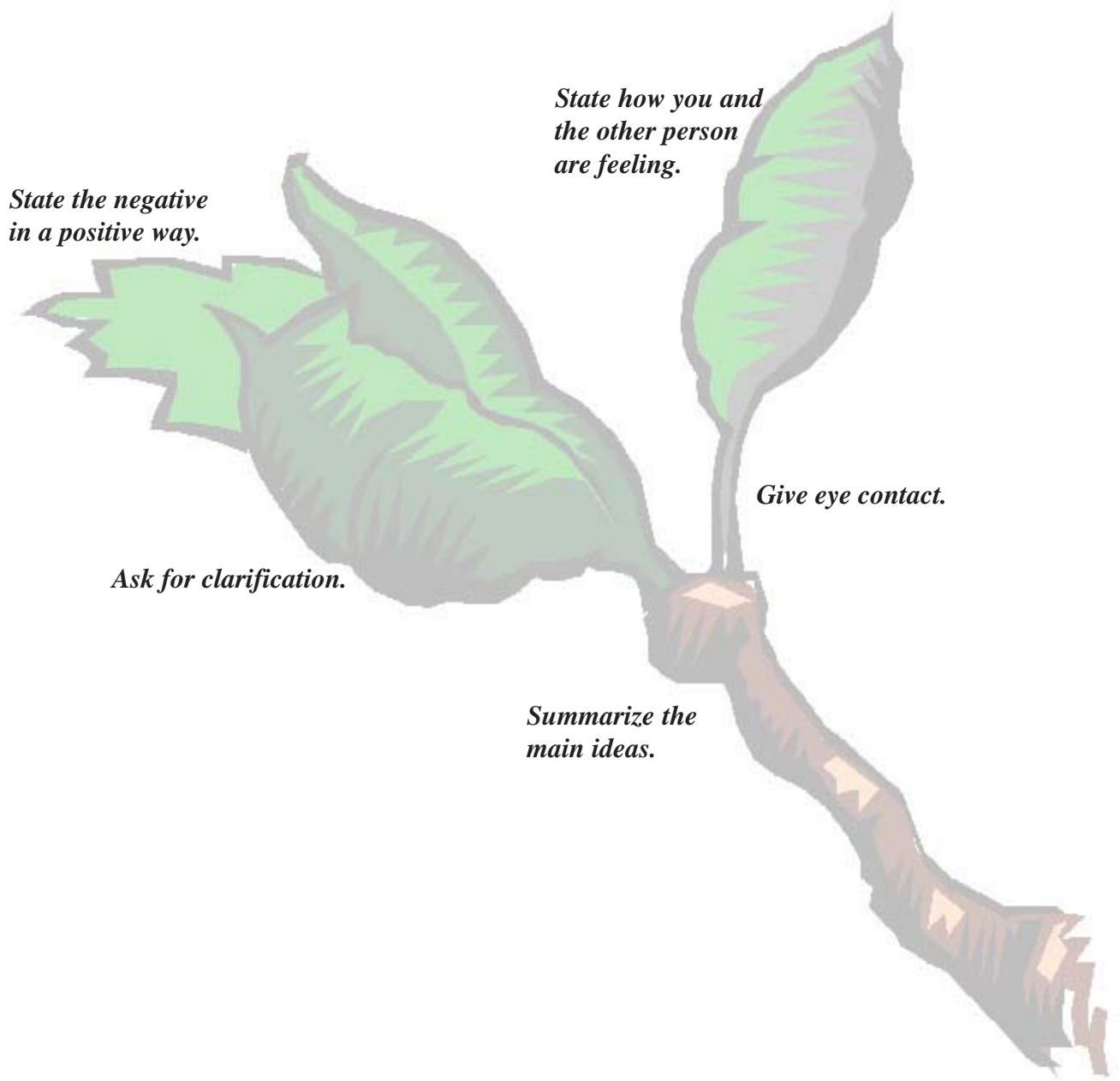
Self-Improvement Plan Based on Job Evaluations

Think about a self-improvement plan in regard to your systematic feedback and evaluations. Below list your strengths and needs. How do you want to turn your needs into strengths? What are strategies you can do daily, weekly, and monthly?

Strengths

Needs

Daily Strategies

Weekly Strategies

Monthly Strategies
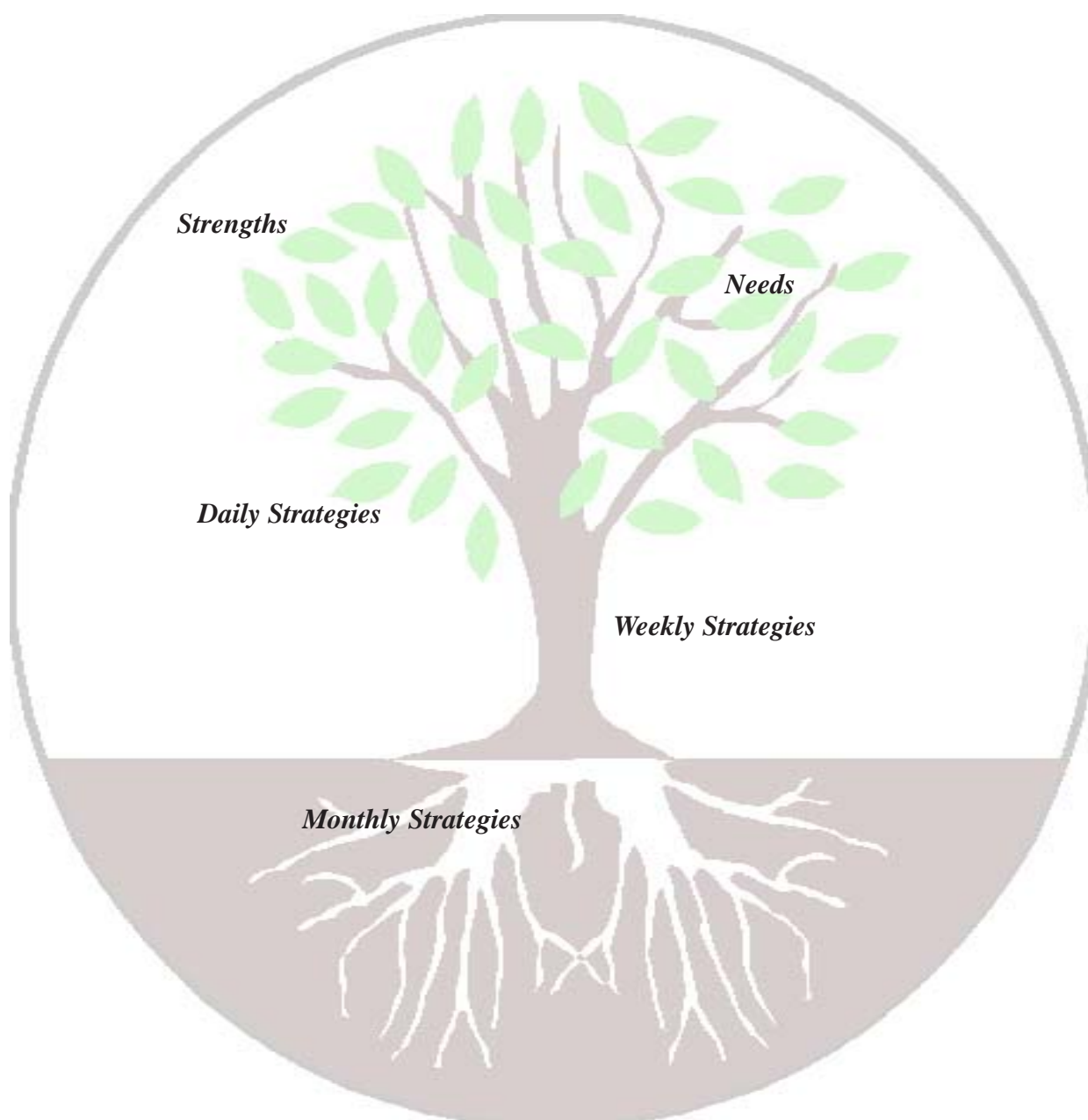
Personal Growth and Development
Resource List

Personal Growth and Development Academy
Resource List

Adams, J. (1984). *Transforming Work*. Alexandria, VA: Miles River Press.

Anderson, N. (1995). *Work With Passion: How to do What You Love for a Living*. New World Library.

Andreas, C., & Andreas, S. (1989). *Heart of the Mind: Engaging Your Inner Power to Change with Neuro-Linguistic Programming*. Real People Press.

Bridges, W. (1980). *Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes* (2nd ed.). Perseus Press.

Boud, D. (2001). Using journal writing to enhance reflective practice. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 90, p. 9-17.

Cameron, J. (1992). *The Artist's Way: Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity*. Los Angeles, CA: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Perigree.

Chase, B., Germundsen, R., & Brownstein, J. C. (2001). Making the connection between increased student learning and reflective practice. *Educational Horizons*, *79*(3), p. 143-7.

Costa, A., & Kallick, B. (2000). Getting into the habit of reflection. *Educational Leadership*, *57*(7), p. 60-2.

Covey, S. (1989). *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Crum, T. F. (1987). *The Magic of Conflict*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

De Bono, E. (1990). *Lateral Thinking: Creativity Step-by-Step*. Harper Collins.

Fields, R., Taylor, P, Weyler, R., & Ingrasci, R. (Eds.). (1984). *Chop Wood, Carry Water: A Guide to Finding Spiritual Fulfillment in Everyday Life*. New York, NY: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin Putnum Inc.

Fincher, S. F. (1991). *Creating Mandalas: For Insight, Healing and Self-Expression*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.

Fox, M. (1995). *The Re-Invention of Work: A New Vision of Livelihood for Our Time*. San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins.

Fritz, R. (1989). *The Path of Least Resistance: Learning to Become the Creative Force in Your Own Life* (Rev. Ed.). Fawcett Books.

Godwin, M. (2000). *Who Are You: 101 Ways of Seeing Yourself*. Penguin USA.

Halpern, S., & Savary, L. M. (1985). *Sound Health: The Music And Sounds That Make Us Whole*. Harper Collins.

Haray, K., & Donahue, E. (1994). *Who Do You Think You Are?: Explore Your Many-Sided Self with the Berkeley Personality Profile*. San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins.

Hart, M., Stevens, J., & Lieberman, F. (1990). *Drumming at the Edge of Magic: A Journey into the Spirit of Percussion*. San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins.

Keen, S., & Valley-Fox, A. (1989). *Your Mythic Journey: Finding Meaning in Your Life Through Writing and Storytelling*. New York, NY: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin Putnum Inc.

Kruse, S. D. (1997). Reflective activity in practice: Vignettes of teachers' deliberative work. *Journal of Research and Development in Education, 31*(1), p. 46-60.

Kummerrow, J. M., Barger, N. J., & Kirby, L. K. (1997). *Worktypes*. Warner Books.

Leahy, R. & Corcoran, C. A. (1996). Encouraging reflective practitioners: Connecting classroom to fieldwork. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, *29*(2), p. 104-110.

Mitchell, S. (1992). *Tao te Ching: A New English Version*. Harper Perennial.

Moore, R. (1991). *Awakening the Hidden Storyteller: How to build a Storytelling Tradition in Your Family*. Boston, MA: Sambhala.

Moore, T. (1997). *The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life*. Harper Collins.

Ponzio, R. (2001, Spring). Reflective Practitioners: Learning from the past, acting in the present: The role of reflection on action in the education and human development professions. *The Researcher*, p. 36-40.

Richards, M. C. (1999). *Centering in Pottery, Poetry and the Person*. Lincoln, NE: Wesleyan University Press.

Rico, G. (2000). *Writing the Natural Way: Using Right-Brain Techniques to Release Your Expressive Powers* (Rev. Ed.). Jeremy P. Tarcher.

Sparks-Langer, G. M., & Colton, A. B. (1991). Synthesis of research on teachers' reflective thinking. *Educational Leadership*, *48*(7), p. 37-44.

Spencer, S. A., & Adams, J. D. (1990). *Life Changes: Growing Through Personal Transitions*. San Luis Obispo, CA: Impact Publishing.

Stone, R. (1996). *The Healing Art of StoryTelling*. Hyperion.

Swain, S. S. (1998). Studying teachers' transformations: reflection as methodology. *The Clearing House*, *72*(1), p. 28-34.

Tulku, T. (1991). S*killful Means: Patterns for Success* (Rev. Ed.). Dharma Publishing.

Ueland, B. (1985). *If You Want to Write: A Book about Art, Independence and Spirit*. Graywolf Press.